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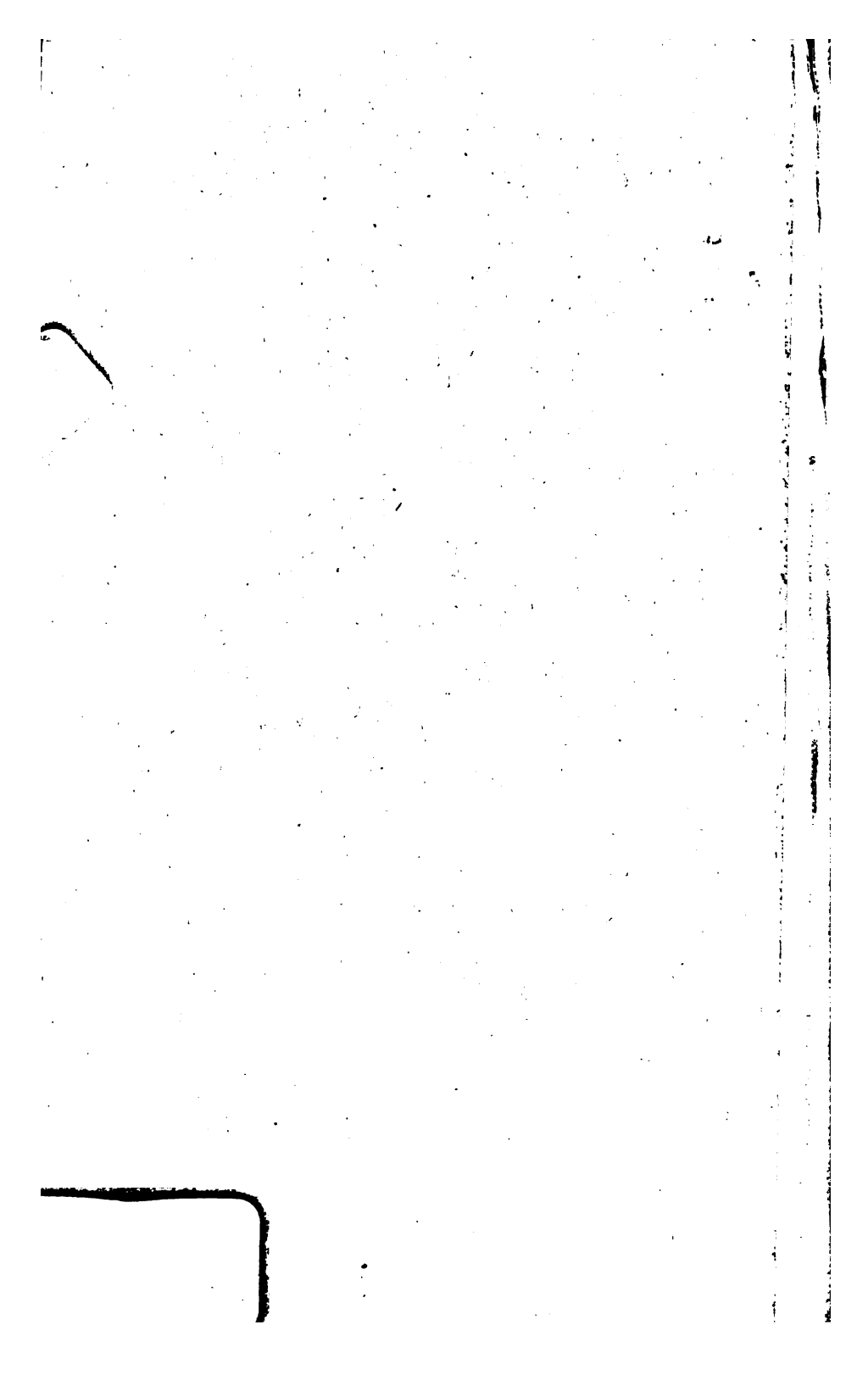
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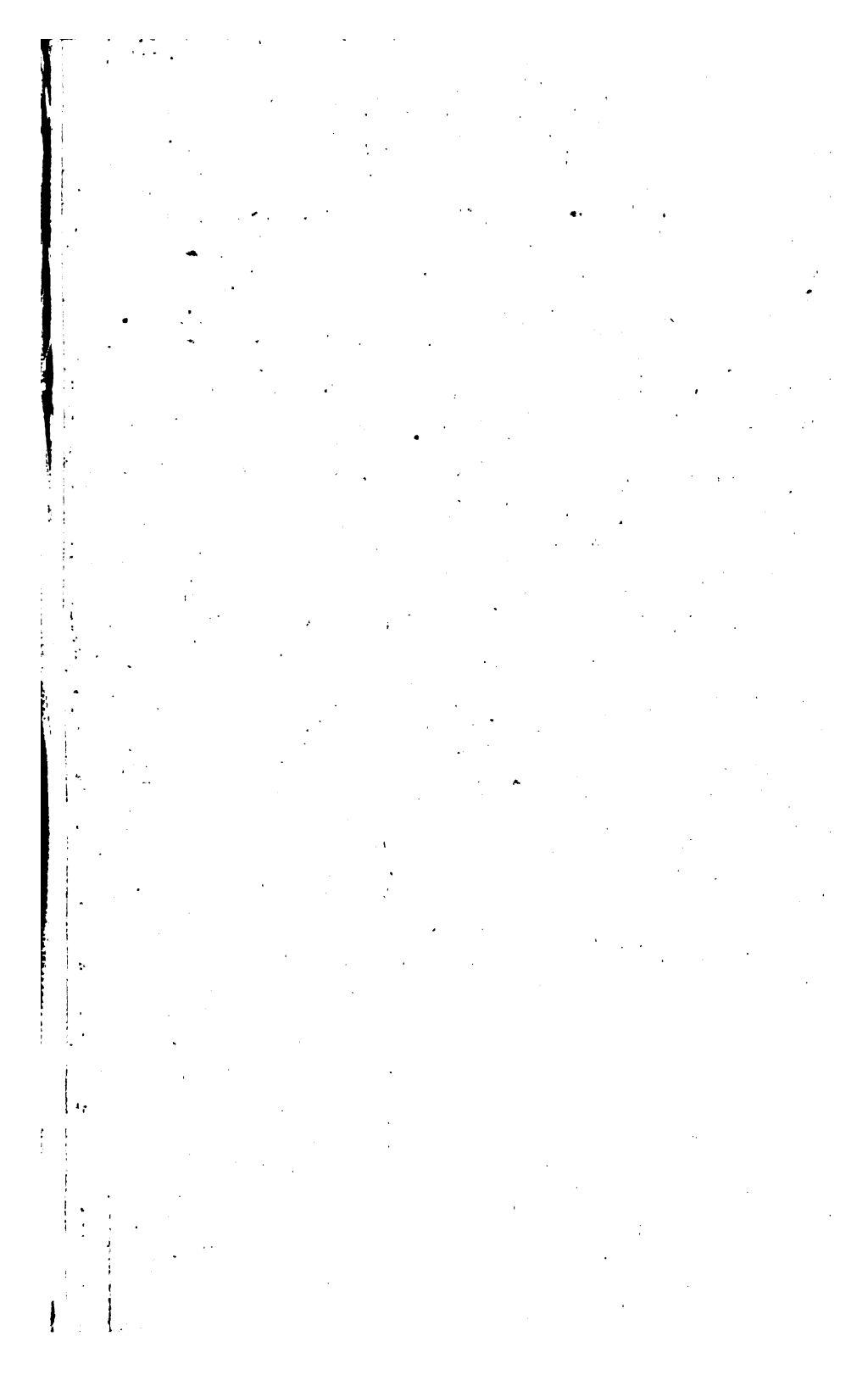
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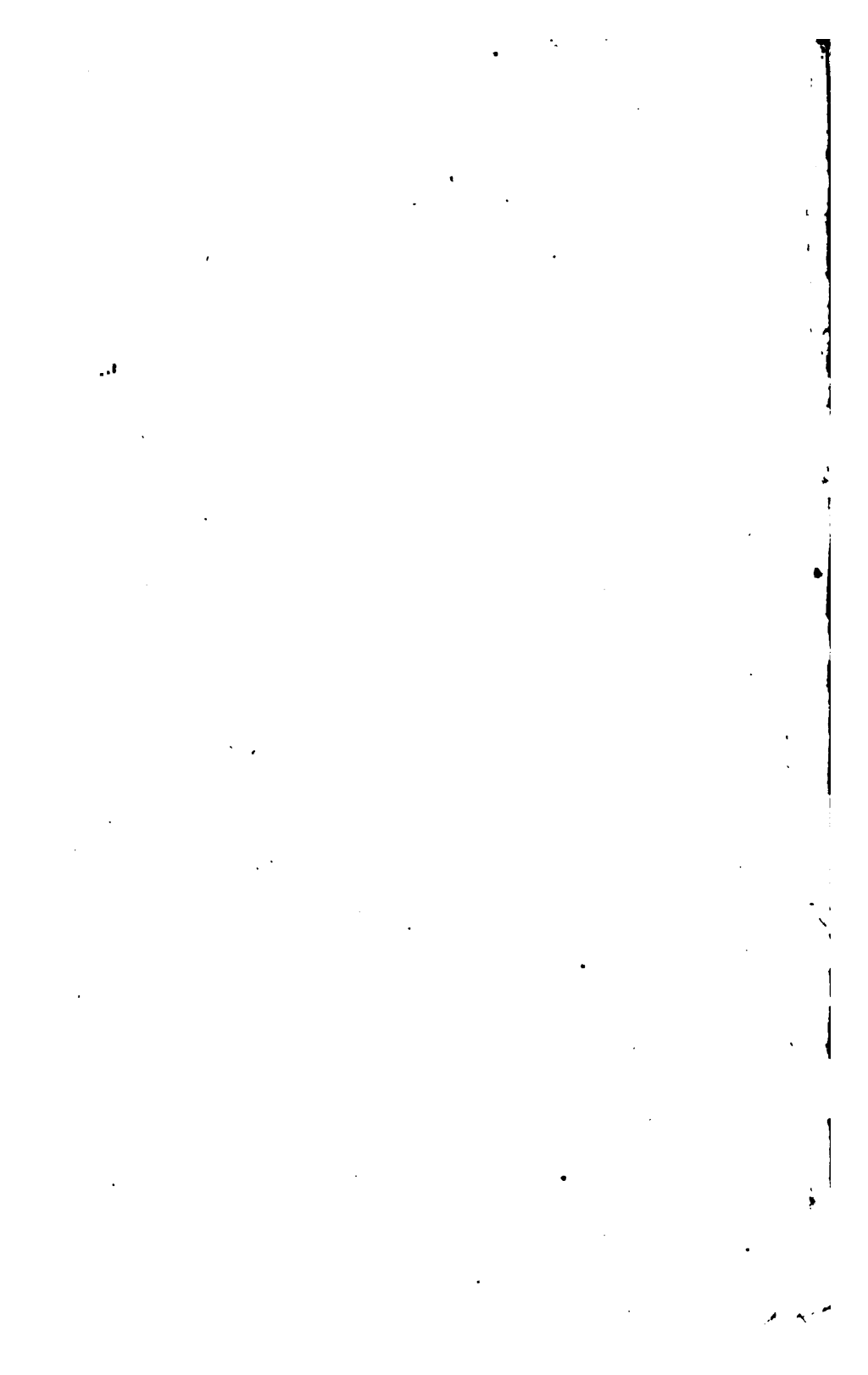






POSTHUMOUS WORKS
OF
FREDERIC II.
KING OF PRUSSIA.

VOL. VI.



CORRESPONDENCE.

L E T T E R S

BETWEEN

F R E D E R I C II.

AND

M. DE VOLTAIRE.



TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

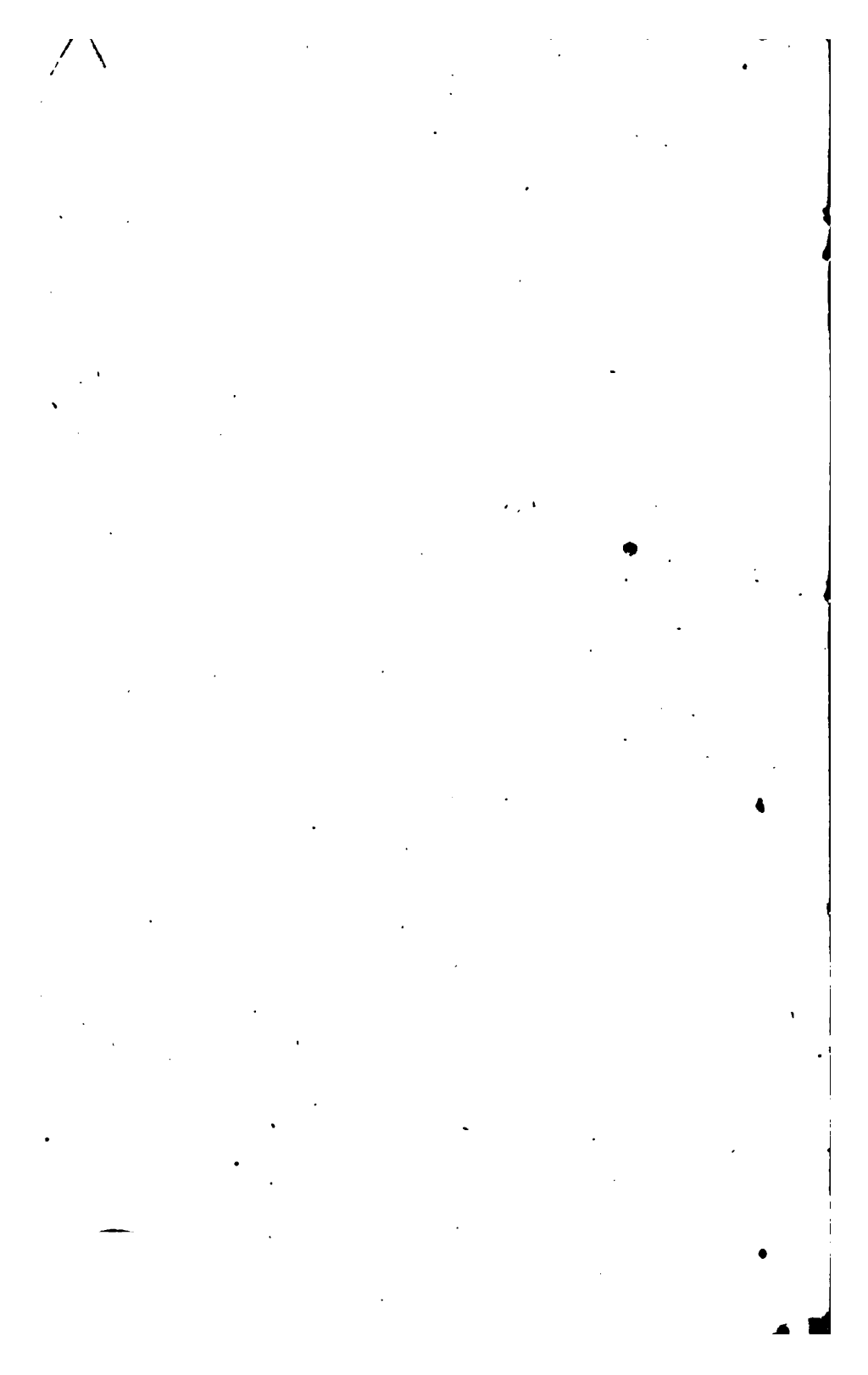
THOMAS HOLCROFT.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR

G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER - ROW.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.



L E T T E R S

B E T W E E N

FREDERIC II. AND M. DE VOLTAIRE.

L E T T E R, I.

From the King, while Prince Royal.

SIR,

Berlin, August 8, 1736.

THOUGH I have not the pleasure of being personally known to you, I am not the less acquainted with you in your writings. They are, if I may be allowed the expression, treasures of mind, and pieces of workmanship laboured with so much taste, delicacy, and art, that their beauties appear new every time they are examined. I imagine I have discovered in them

VOL. VI.

B

the

the character of their ingenious author, who does honour to the age and to the human understanding. The great men among the moderns will one day be indebted to you, and to you only, should the dispute between the ancients and moderns ever be revived, for having inclined the scale in their favour.

To the quality of an excellent poet you add an infinity of additional knowledge, which it is true has some relation to poetry, but which has never been appropriated to it, except by yourself. Never before did poet impart cadence to metaphysical reflections; this honour was reserved for you. It was the taste which you discovered, in your writings, for philosophy that induced me to send you the translation I have caused to be made of the accusation and justification of Wolf, the most celebrated philosopher of our times; and who, for having introduced light into the dark abodes of metaphysics, and for having treated subjects so abstruse in a manner equally dignified, precise, and clear, is cruelly accused of irreligion and atheism. Such is the destiny of great men; the superiority of their genius continually exposes them to the envenomed shafts of calumny and envy.

I am at present causing the treatise on God, on the soul, and on the world, which has fallen
from

from the pen of the same author, to be translated. I will send it to you, sir, as soon as it shall be finished; and I am certain that the force of his demonstrations will strike you through all his propositions, which he pursues geometrically, and connects them with each other, like links of the same chain.

The kindness with which you regard, and the support you afford to, all those who devote themselves to arts and sciences, lead me to hope that you will not exclude me from the number of the persons whom you shall deem worthy of receiving your instructions; for I may justly call a correspondence with you by letter instructive; it cannot but be profitable to any thinking being. I dare even affirm, without derogating from the merit of any one, there is not, in the whole world, an exception to be made in favour of any man of whom you are not worthy to be the master.

Without being prodigal of praise which would be unworthy of your acceptance, I may add, I find innumerable beauties in your works. Your *Henriade* charms me; it happily triumphs over the injudicious criticisms by which it has been attacked. In the tragedy of *Cæsar*, we behold characters well supported. The sentiments are all splendid and great; and we feel that Brutus is either Roman or English. *Alzira* to the grace

of novelty adds a happy contrast between savage and European manners. You shew us, in the character of Gusman, that christianity ill understood, and under the guidance of false zeal, renders man more barbarous and inhuman than paganism itself.

Corneille, the great Corneille, who attracted the admiration of his age, could he at present rise from the dead, would behold with astonishment, and perhaps with envy, that the tragic muse has lavished favours upon you which she granted to him but sparingly. What have we not to expect from the author of so many works of genius! What new miracles will not start from the pen which so lately, so wittily, and so elegantly, has delineated the temple of taste!

These are the reasons that induced me ardently to desire the possession of all your works. I entreat, sir, you will send them, will communicate them to me, without reserve. If among your manuscripts there should be any one which, from motives of necessary circumspection, you think proper to conceal from the eyes of the public, I promise to preserve it in the sanctuary of secrecy, and to remain satisfied with bestowing my single unsocial applause. I know that unfortunately the faith of princes is a thing but little respected, in our days; but I nevertheless
hope

hope you will not suffer yourself to be prejudiced by general opinion, and that you will kindly consider me as an exception to the rule.

I shall think myself more wealthy, by possessing your works, than I could be by the acquirement of all the transitory and despicable gifts of fortune, which the same chance that gives takes away. The first, I mean your works, we may, by the aid of memory, make our own, and while memory should remain they would be ours. Knowing the little strength of mine, I long hesitate before I can determine on the choice of those subjects with which it ought to be stored.

Were poetry in the state in which it formerly was, and did poets at present continue to write dull idyls, eclogues cast in the same mould, and insipid stanzas, or if at best they could only tune the lyre to elegy, I should for ever renounce poetry. But you ennoble the art : you indicate new roads, and paths unknown to the * * * and the Rousseaus of the age.

There are qualities in your verses which render them respectable, and worthy to be admired and studied by all respectable people. They contain a course of morality, and by reading we are taught to think and to act ; virtue is painted, in them in colours the most beautiful ; the idea of true glory is there determinate, precise ; and

you insinuate a love of the sciences in so artful and so delicate a manner, that whoever has read your works is inspired with the ambition of following your traces. How often have I said to myself——“Leave, wretched man, a burthen “ which thou art unable to bear ! Voltaire cannot be imitated, for Voltaire stands alone * !”

In moments like these, I have felt that the advantages of birth, and the fumes of grandeur which vanity so continually inspires, are of but little, or, to speak more truly, of no worth. They are distinctions foreign to ourselves, and which do but adorn the figure. How much more preferable are talents and understanding ! How much are we indebted to the man, by nature distinguished, in whom they have taken birth ! Nature delights in forming men whom she endows with all necessary capacity to make a progress in the arts and sciences ; and it is for princes to reward their labours. Alas, why has not fate made me the instrument of bestowing the wreath due to your success ? My only fear is that this country, but little fertile in lau-

* The French reads “ Voltaire cannot be imitated unless by being Voltaire himself.” The translator has taken the liberty of avoiding the old joke of the elephant, which was the largest in the whole world, except himself. T.

rels, will not afford sufficient to reward your works.

If fate should not favour me so far as to make you mine, I at least may hope some day to see the man whom, at so great a distance, I have admired; and personally to assure you I am, with all the esteem and respect due to those who, following the torch of truth as their guide, consecrate their labours to the public,

SIR,

Your affectionate friend,

FEDERIC*, P. R. of Prussia.

LETTER II.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

Paris, August 26, 1736.

I SHOULD indeed be insensible were I not exceedingly affected by the letter with which your royal highness has deigned to honour me. My self-love is there too highly flattered; but

* The editors of the edition of Basil, and of the Letters of Count Suhm, inform us that the king of Prussia always signed himself *Federic*, because the pronunciation was more soft than *Frederic*.

my love of the human race, which is ever in my heart, and which, I will venture to affirm, constitutes my character, has imparted a pleasure a thousand times more pure, when I perceived there was one prince in the world who thought like a man; a philosophic prince born to render men happy.

Permit me to say, there is not a man on earth who is not indebted to the care with which you apply yourself to cultivate, by sound philosophy, a mind born to command. Be assured, there never have been any truly good kings, except such who, like you, began by acquiring knowledge, by studying man, by the love of truth, and by the detestation of persecution and superstition. There is no monarch who, thinking thus, might not restore the golden age in his domains. How does it happen that so few kings seek this advantage? You are sensible of it, sir: others think more of royalty than of humanity; you do exactly the reverse. Be assured that if hereafter the tumult of affairs, and the wickedness of man, shall not alter a character so divine, you will be adored by your people, and revered by the whole earth. Philosophers, worthy so to be called, will crowd to your states. Like as the most celebrated artists repair, in multitudes, to the countries where their art is held

held in the most esteem, so will thinking men surround your throne.

The illustrious queen Christina quitted her kingdom to go in search of the arts : only reign, sir, and the arts will come in search of you.

May you never be disgusted with the sciences because of the quarrels of the scientific ! You perceive, sir, from the facts which you have deigned to inform me of, that the literati are men, in general, as much as courtiers are ; they are sometimes equally avaricious, intriguing, false and cruel ; and the only difference, between the pests of the court and the pests of the schools, is that the latter are the most ridiculous.

It is a melancholy reflexion, for humanity, that those who call themselves the denouncers of the heavenly commands, the interpreters of the Deity, in a word, that the theologians, are sometimes of all men the most dangerous ; that they are as pernicious to society as they are obscure in their opinions ; and that their minds are inflated with gall and pride, in proportion as they are destitute of truth. They wish to disturb the world in defence of a sophism, and to induce kings to revenge with fire and sword the insulted honour of an argument in *ferio*, or in *barbara*.

Every

Every thinking being who is not of their opinion is an atheist; and every king who does not favour them is to suffer damnation. You know, sir, the best that can be done is to abandon these pretended preceptors, but real enemies, of the human race, to their own course. Their words when unnoticed evaporate in wind*; but should the influence of authority interfere, the wind becomes a tempest which sometimes overturns the throne.

With the joy of a heart full of love for the public good, I perceive, sir, the immense distance which you place between those men who peaceably seek the truth, and those who are desirous of warfare in defence of words, the meaning of which they do not understand. I perceive that men like Newton, Leibnitz, Bayle and Locke, those elevated, enlightened and gentle spirits, afford you intellectual nutriment; and that you cast away all other pretended aliments, which you find to be empoisoned or unsubstantial.

I cannot too much thank your royal highness for your goodness in sending me the little book concerning Wolf: I deem his metaphysical

* The French reads—*se perd en l'air comme du vent*—i. e., "Are lost in air like the wind." The understanding of Voltaire himself was not sufficiently copious to be always correct. T.

ideas to be such as do honour to the human understanding: they are flashes of lightning, in the midst of deep darkness, and this I believe is all that can be hoped from metaphysics. There is little probability that first causes should ever be well understood. The mice that inhabit some small chinks, in a vast building, neither know whether the building be eternal, who is the architect, nor wherefore it has been built by that architect: they endeavour to preserve life, to people their holes, and to fly the destructive animals by which they are pursued. Such mice are we; and the divine architect who has built the universe has never yet, to my knowledge, revealed his secret to any mouse among us. If any one may more than another pretend to such divination, it is M. Wolf. We may contend with, but we must esteem him; for his philosophy is far from being pernicious. What can be more noble, more true, than to say like him that men ought to be equitable, even though they should have the misfortune to be atheists *?

The protection which it seems you afford, sir, to this learned man, is a proof of the justice of

* There seems reason to suspect some error of the press. The author probably said, or meant to say — "Justice should be done to all men, even though they should have the misfortune to be atheists." T,

your

your mind, and of the humanity of your sentiments,

You have the goodness, sir, to promise to send me the treatise on God, on the soul, and on the world.—What a present! How uncommon an intercourse!—The heir of a throne, from the splendors of his palace, deigns to send a hermit his instructions! Grant me the promised present, sir, of which I am only worthy from my extreme love for truth. Princes generally dread to hear the truth; but by you truth shall be taught.

With respect to poetry, of which you have spoken to me, you think with the same good sense on this art as on all other subjects. Poetry which does not teach men some new and affecting truth does but little deserve to be read. You are sensible nothing can be more contemptible than to pass our lives in rhyming those common place thoughts which do not merit the name of thought. If there be any thing still more contemptible, it is that of being a satirical poet, of writing only to decry the writings of others. Such poets are to Parnassus what those doctors are to the schools who understand nothing but words, and who cabal against such as treat on realities.

If

If the *Henriade* has had the good fortune not to displease your royal highness, I am indebted for this to the love of the true, and to the horror which my poem inspires against the factious, the persecutor, the superstitious, the tyrannical, and the rebellious. It is the work of an honest man, and ought to find favour in the presence of a philosophic prince.

You command me to send you my other works: I will obey, sir; you shall be my judge, and to you I will appeal instead of to the public; to you I will submit what I ventured to write on philosophy, and your reflection shall be my reward; a reward which few sovereigns have it in their power to bestow. Of your secrecy I am certain; your virtues must equal your understanding.

I shall esteem it a very singular happiness personally to come and pay my respects to your royal highness. We travel to Rome to visit churches, pictures, ruins, and basso-relievos. A prince like you, sir, much better deserves such a journey; the rarity contains much more of the marvellous. But friendship will not permit me to leave the retreat in which it detains me. You, no doubt, think like Julian. This great man, who has been so much calumniated,

said that friends ought ever to be preferred to kings.

In whatever corner of the world I shall end my days, be certain, sir, my supplications will ever be offered up for you; that is to say, for the happiness of a whole people. My heart will ever rank me among your subjects, and your glory will be ever dear to me. It is my wish that you may continually resemble your present self, and that other kings may resemble you.

I am, with profound respect,
Your royal highness's
very humble, &c.

L E T T E R III.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Rheinberg, September 9, 1736*.

TO receive praises from a man of your merit is putting a scholar in philosophy very

* The date in the Berlin edition is November 4, but the date of the Basil edition in this instance (and many others) is confirmed by the answer of Voltaire. I shall, however, make it my duty to notice the variations as they occur; and shall speak concerning these editions in some general remarks at the conclusion of the work, which it will be necessary to make. T.

severely

severely to the proof. Presumption, and the love of self, those cruel tyrants of the soul, which poison it by flattery, imagine they have acquired the authority of a philosopher, and, receiving arms from your hands, would usurp an empire over my reason, which I have ever disputed with them. Happy shall I be if, by convincing them, and by the practice of philosophy, I may one day equal the perhaps too advantageous idea which you have conceived of me.

You have drawn the portrait of an accomplished prince, sir, in your letter, in which I cannot discover my own features. You have given me a lesson, which you have clothed after the most ingenious and most obliging fashion; in fine, you have employed artifice to introduce timid truth into the company of a prince. It is my intention to make this portrait a model, and I will employ every effort to render myself the worthy disciple of a master who knows so divinely how to instruct.

I already feel myself infinitely indebted to your works, from which sentiments and knowledge may be acquired worthy of the greatest men. My vanity does not prompt me to suppose myself one of these; and, if I may be indulged in the ambition of hereafter becoming

ing

ing one, I shall be indebted for my success, fir, to you.

Some traits of worth should Europe think my due,
Truth will proclaim, I owe them all to you.

I cannot forbear to admire that generous character, that love of the human race, by which you merit the applause of all nations, which I dare even affirm are more indebted to you than the Greeks were to their sage legislators, Solon and Lycurgus, whose laws made their country flourish, and laid the foundation of a grandeur to which, without them, Greece never could have aspired. Authors, in a certain sense, are public men; their writings are every where spread, are known to the whole world, and manifest to the reader the ideas with which they are impressed. You publish your opinions; their beauty, the charms of diction and of eloquence, in a word, all that the ardour of thought and the power of elocution are capable of producing, enchant your readers; your affections are moved, and presently, by the sympathizing impulse which you communicate, the whole earth breathes the same love of mankind. You form good citizens, faithful friends, and subjects who, abhorring rebellion, are zealous for the public welfare. How much are men indebted to you!

Though

Though all Europe should not acknowledge a truth, which is not therefore the less a truth, though it should not be inspired with all that gratitude which is so justly your due, still assure yourself of mine; and henceforth regard my actions as the fruits of your lessons. I have received those lessons, my heart has been moved, and to practise them during life is what I have imposed upon myself as an inviolable law.

I see with admiration, sir, that your knowledge has not confined itself to the sciences only, but that you have sounded the utmost depths of the human heart, and that the salutary advice you give me, by desiring me to be diffident of myself, originated there. For this I thank you, sir, and wish to repeat it to myself incessantly.

It is one of the deplorable effects of human frailty that men are not always equal to themselves; their resolutions are often destroyed with the same promptitude with which they were formed. The Spaniards very judiciously say—such a man *has been* brave. Might it not, with equal truth, be said that great men are not always, nor wholly, great?

If there be one thing I more ardently desire than all others, it is to be surrounded by able and learned men. I shall not think those endeavours which I shall employ to attract them

to me lost; it is but a homage due to their merit, and a confession of the necessity we have of their instructions.

I cannot recover from my astonishment when I recollect that a nation, improved by the fine arts and aided by genius, a nation which so long has been in possession of good taste, should remain ignorant of the treasure she herself possesses. What! And does that Voltaire to whom we erect altars and statues, neglected by his country, live a hermit in the further part of the province of Champagne! This is a paradox; an enigma; one of the strange effects of the caprice of men!

Do not fear, sir, that ever I should be disgusted with learning, because of the quarrels of the learned. I shall always know the proper distinction between the sciences, themselves, and those by whom science is degraded. Their disputes generally originate either in excessive ambition, and the insatiable avidity of acquiring fame, or in the envy inferior merit conceives at beholding the splendor of genius, and itself in the shade. Great men are liable to persecution from the latter cause. Thus trees, the branches of which rise to the clouds, are more exposed to the injuries of weather, the storm and the whirlwind, than the weak shrubs which grow beneath
and

and are sheltered by their foliage. It was this which from the depths of hell raised up the calumnies incited against Descartes and Bayle. It is the superiority of yourself and of Wolf which offends the ignorant, and induces those to exclaim whose ridiculous presumption would ruin every man, the understanding, learning, and knowledge of whom should efface their own. But let us for a moment suppose that great men should even forget themselves so far as to be angry with each other; ought we therefore to deny them the title of great, and deprive them of the esteem which they have deserved by their various eminent qualities? The public usually does not pardon; it condemns the smallest faults; its judgment is fixed only on the present, and the past is estimated at nothing: but we ought not to imitate the public. I seek for learned and worthy men, and not for men who are free from error. When did nature form such a model of virtue as to be exempt from all blame? I should think myself happy, if the world would have the same indulgence for my defects as I have for the defects of others.

When stunned by the contest of the rhymers of Parnassus, I advise them to read the preface to *Alzira*; where, sir, you have given them a

lesson which they ought never to forget, and to which nothing can be added.

With respect to the theologians, it appears that they generally resemble each other, be they of what nation or of what religion they may. Their design is to arrogate to themselves a despotic power over the conscience, and this is sufficient to render them the zealous persecutors of all those who nobly dare to unveil truth. They are continually armed with anathematizing thunder, that they may, by their curses, crush the imaginary phantom of irreligion, which they unremittingly combat. Yet listen to them and they will preach humility, a virtue which they never yet have practised, and call themselves the ministers of the God of peace, whom they serve with hearts overflowing with hatred and ambition. Their conduct, which is so little conformable to their morality, would, in my opinion, be sufficient to discredit their doctrine.

The character of truth is wholly different. She has no need of arms to defend herself, nor of violence to engage man to be of her faith. Let her but appear, and as soon as her luminous rays have dispersed the clouds by which she was concealed, her triumph is certain.

What I have said, I imagine, contains some traits which sufficiently characterise the clergy,
and

and which, were they to read, would not induce them to choose us for their panegyrists. I know however enough of their defects to be in conscience obliged to render them that justice which is their due. Boileau, in his satire against women, had the equity to except three ladies of Paris, whose acknowledged virtue sheltered them from his darts. Following his example, I can cite two prelates, in the kingdom of Prussia, who love truth, who are philosophers, and whose integrity and candour well deserve that they should not be confounded with the multitude. This is a testimony which I owe to Messieurs de Beaufobre and Reinbec; men who equally merit the epithet of celebrated.

The vulgar crowd, among the clergy, certainly are unworthy that we should descend so far as to inform ourselves of the dissensions by which they are agitated. I willingly leave such men the freedom of teaching and believing whatever can procure themselves some satisfaction; and the more willingly because my character is not violent. But this same character, which renders me the defender of freedom, equally induces me to hate persecution. I cannot be an idle spectator of innocence oppressed. To suffer this would be timidity and cowardice.

I never should so warmly have embraced the cause of M. Wolf, had I not seen men who call themselves reasonable exhaust their bitterness, and gall, against a philosopher who has dared to think freely; and had I not seen these men carry their blind fury so far as to hate, without being able to give any other reason for their hatred than what arose from a difference of opinion; at the very moment too that they would be lavish in their praise of a rascal, a perfidious, or a hypocritical wretch, who possessed no other advantage than that of thinking as they did.

I am delighted, sir, to see the glorious testimony which you bestow on four of the greatest philosophers Europe has produced. Their works are treasures of truth and error. The diversity of their sentiments teaches us how much the imagination is subject to stray, and how narrow are the limits of the human understanding. If Newton, Leibnitz, and Locke, men of such superior genius, and accustomed during their whole lives to think, were unable entirely to throw off the yoke of prejudice, that they might obtain certainty and knowledge, what can be expected from a school-boy in philosophy, like me?

M. Wolf must be highly flattered by the approbation with which you honour his metaphysics,

physics, and which in reality he merits. It is one of the most finished works of the kind that has ever been written, and there is a pleasure in submitting it to the judgment of one whom neither its beauties nor its weak parts can escape.

I am sorry that I am unable to accompany this letter with the translation, which I have promised you, of his metaphysics. You know, sir, these kind of works are slow in execution. However I have ordered the part which is finished to be copied, and I hope to send it by the next letter you shall receive from me.

I send with this the logic of M. Wolf, translated by M. Deschamps, a young man possessed of good natural abilities, and who has had the advantage to be a disciple of the author, which made the translation a work of much greater ease. It appears to me that he has been rather successful: I only wish that, for his own sake, he had corrected and abridged the dedication, in which he has been very prodigal of praise to me, and which would have been infinitely more in character, had it been inserted in an opera prologue, addressed to Louis XIV.

I do not declare myself in favour of the *Henriade* alone, which is the only epic poem the French possess, but of all your works; they generally bear the stamp of immortality.

Such equal elevation, supported through so many different subjects, can only be the effect of a very uncommon mind, and a universal genius. Permit me, sir, to say you are the only person capable of uniting the deep meditations of the philosopher, the talents of the historian, and the vivid imagination of the poet.

You have given me a very sensible pleasure by the promise you have made of sending me all your works. The infinite esteem in which I hold them is my only merit. Emperors and monarchs may bestow wealth, even kingdoms, and all which can flatter the pride of avarice and the cupidity of men; but these are external things; and instead of rendering them more enlightened or more virtuous, they usually serve but to corrupt. The present you have promised me, sir, is of a very different nature. By reading what you write, our manners may be corrected, and our minds adorned.

Far from having the silly presumption of erecting myself the arbiter of your labours, I shall be satisfied with admiring. The end I propose to myself is instruction. Like the bee, I wish to gather honey from the flowers, and shall leave to the spider the trouble of extracting the poison.

It

It is not for a voice so feeble as mine to add to your renown, which already is spread so far; but the world will at least be obliged to own that the descendants of the ancient Goths and Vandals, the inhabitants of the forests of Germany, know how to render justice to resplendent merit, and to the virtues and the talents of the great men of all nations.

I know, sir, the vexation to which I might expose you, were I to be guilty of indiscretion, relative to the works you may send me in manuscript. Let me intreat you to confide in me, and in my promise: my fidelity is inviolable.

I too much respect the ties of friendship to wish to tear you from the arms of Emily: mine must be a hard and insensible heart, were I to propose a sacrifice like this; neither could he ever have known from experience the delight there is in being with the person we love, who should not feel the pain which such a separation must give you. All I request of you is to pay homage, in my behalf, to that astonishing prodigy of genius and knowledge. Such women are indeed uncommon.

Be persuaded, sir, that I know the value of your esteem; but that I also recollect the lesson which the *Henriade* gives,

“How

“How dangerous ’tis t’ acquire too early fame.”

It is a burthen under the weight of which most people sink.

There is no kind of happiness which I do not wish you, nor any of which you are not worthy. Cirey shall hereafter be my Delphos, and your correspondence, which I entreat you to continue, my oracle.

I am, sir, with very singular esteem,

Your affectionate friend, &c.

L E T T E R IV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

November, 1736.

I SHED tears of joy at reading your letter of the 9th of September, which your royal highness did me the honour to address to me, and in which I discovered a prince who certainly will gain the love of all mankind. I am every way astonished. You speak like Trajan, you write like Pliny, and your French is that of our best authors. How vast is the difference between

men! Louis XIV. was a great king, and I respect his memory; but he did not speak with your humanity, nor did he express himself in your language. I have seen some of his letters, and he did not know the orthography of his mother tongue. Berlin, under your auspices, shall become the Athens of Germany, and perhaps of Europe. I here reside in a city where two private persons, M. Boerhaave, and M. s'Gravesende, attract a company of between four and five hundred foreigners. Greater numbers will flock round a prince like you; and I confess I think I might be deemed very unfortunate * were I to die before I had seen the model of princes and the wonder of Germany. I do not wish to flatter you, sir; it would be criminal; it would be to breathe poison upon a flower. Of this I am incapable. It is my affections, my heart, that speak to your royal highness.

I have read the logic of M. Wolf, which you have been pleased to send me, and will venture to say it is impossible he should be a bad writer

* The French reads—*Je me tiendrais bien malheureux si je mourais avant d'avoir*, &c. Which is tantamount to he should grieve when he was dead. I should not write such notes as this, had not experience taught me it is necessary a translator should ask pardon, not only for committing blunders himself, but, for correcting those his author may happen to commit. T.

whose ideas are so clear and so orderly. I am no longer astonished that such a prince should love such a philosopher; they were formed for each other. Can your royal highness, who reads his works, ask for mine? The possessor of a diamond mine requests a bead of glass: but you command and I obey.

I found, on arriving at Amsterdam, that an edition of my feeble performances had been begun, and I shall do myself the honour to send you the first copy. In the mean time, I shall venture to remit your royal highness a manuscript, which I durst never shew to a mind more under the power of prejudice, or less philosophic and indulgent than yours; or to any but a prince, who, with every other homage, merits that also of unbounded confidence. A little time is necessary to revise and transcribe it; and I shall then send it, according to the mode you shall please to point out, and shall exclaim,

Parve, sed invideo, sine me, liber, ibis ad illum.

Indispensable occupations, and circumstances of which I am not the master, prevent me from speeding in person to lay that homage at your feet

feet which I so justly owe you. The time may come when I shall be more fortunate.

Your royal highness apparently delights in every species of literature. A great prince is careful of every branch of government: a great genius loves every kind of study. Within my small circle, I could only distantly pay my respects to the boundaries of each science. A little of metaphysics, a little of history, some little of philosophy, and a few verses, have divided my time. Feeble in each kind, I can but offer you what I have.

If you shall please, sir, to amuse yourself with some verses, till the arrival of philosophy, *carmina possumus donare*. I understand that M. Thiriot has the honour to execute some commissions for your royal highness at Paris; I hope, sir, he acts to your satisfaction. If you have any commands for Amsterdam, I shall be exceedingly flattered by being your Thiriot of Holland. Happy he who can serve you, and more happy he who can approach your person.

Did I not interest myself in the happiness of mankind, I should be chagrined to recollect that you are destined to be a king; I should wish you to be a private person, and that my affections might, with freedom, approach yours;
but

but it is requisite my wishes should cede to the public good.

Indulge me, sir, by suffering me to revere, in your person, the man more than the prince; and, of all the greatness that awaits you, permit the greatness of your mind to be the first to attract respect from me. Permit me also once more to repeat the admiration, and the hope, with which you inspire me.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R V.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Rheinberg, November 7, 1736.

I AM exceedingly sensible of the honour you have done me, by placing my name at the beginning of the excellent work which you have sent me *. The thoughts it contains, and the manner in which they are turned, are so favourable to me that I am obliged to confess it

* Epistle to the prince royal of Prussia, prefixed by Voltaire to his volume of Epistles.

is impossible to confide the care of our fame into better hands than yours. The duties of a wise and enlightened king, the code of the pope and the seven cardinals, and the picture you give of the pedantic erudition of James I. of England, certainly are master strokes. Without staying to analyse the remainder of the epistle, which certainly is one of the most finished I have ever yet seen, I return you my very sincere thanks, and am happy to have occasioned it.

I should wish, sir, to be able to testify my gratitude by an epistle in verse, worthy to be addressed to you; but, as the stars hide themselves in the presence of the sun, the gleaming rays of which efface and tarnish their feeble light, so do I impose silence on my unskilful lyre, disowned by the muses, when I am to write to you.

I know that your works are above all price; they contain in themselves their own reward, immortality. Yet I hope you will accept as a mark of remembrance from me, the bust of Socrates*, which I send you because he was the greatest man of Greece and the master who formed Alcibiades. Subtracting all with which he was

* This bust was in gold, and worked for the head of a cane.

blackened

blackened by detraction, I might draw a parallel between yourself and Socrates; but, fearing to wound your modesty should I say the third part of what I think on this subject, I shall satisfy myself with employing all those who may serve as my interpreters to relate to you the sentiments of esteem and admiration, with which I shall ever remain,

Sir, &c.

LETTER VI.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Rheinsberg, November, 13th, 1736.

IT is not rank, Voltaire, nor power, nor birth,

Chimeras vain, can dignify the man.

Poor vulgar errors these. 'Tis wisdom, mind,

'Tis genius. He alone is truly great

Who can, and dares, neglected truth discern,

Spurning at splendid falsehood and the fool,

Who, pompous titles bearing by descent,

Thence arrogates that fame his fathers won,

But to their high born virtues ne'er aspires.

'Tis

'Tis his to seek renown in other paths;
 Illustrious in himself, and self dependent,
 Who, feeling nature's gifts, neglects them not,
 But polishes the diamond she bestows,
 Which else might ne'er emit one splendid ray.

Whoe'er himself ennobles noble is,
 And forces praise in calumny's despite.

Proud Rome still boasts her sweet Correlli's
 lyre,
 Nay France the trills of antique Lully chants.
 "Of haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,"
 By immortal Maro sung, who has not heard?
 Who knows not Titian, Reubens, Bonnarotti,
 Carraccio famed, or he whose deep research *,
 Abstruse in calculations infinite,
 The vaunted Syracusan might instruct?
 What savage region would not bow before
 Cassini the profound? Or who can view
 And not admire the man that plann'd thy proud
 Façade, old Louvre †? Thou, oh Britain, hast
 Thy Newton! Demi God! Thou, France, hast seen

* Algarotti.

† Bernini.—It is necessary to remark, that the designs of
 Claude Perrault for this beautiful façade were preferred to
 those of Bernini, which were rejected. T: See *Nouv. Dis.
 Portatif, Met Bernini*. Amsterdam, 8vo. 1769.

Thy Henry and thy Colbert, both THE GREAT !
And now art blest'd with thy Voltaire, whose
name,
Unblushing, ranks with hero, king, or sage.

You know, sir, without doubt, that the amiable vivacity of the French is not the prevailing character of our nation. But, in revenge, candour and truth in our discourse are attributed to us. This will be sufficient to make you feel that a rhymers, in the remote parts of Germany, is ill adapted to produce impromptus ; neither indeed have the verses I send you that merit.

I have long been in suspense whether I ought or ought not to send my verses to you, the Apollo of the French Parnassus ; to you, with whom poets like Corneille and Racine cannot preserve their rank. I have been determined by two motives ; one, which certainly would have dissuaded any other person, is, sir, that you are yourself a poet, and that consequently you must be acquainted with the insurmountable desire, the phrenzy, which impels us to produce our first essays ; the other, which most strengthened me in my purpose, is the pleasure I take in letting you understand my
sentiments

sentiments in favour of poetry; and these would not have had the same grace in prose.

The greatest merit these verses contain is certainly that of being embellished by your name. I am not so blinded by self-love as to imagine this epistle exempt from errors. I do not even think it worthy of being addressed to you. I have read your works, sir, and those of the most celebrated authors, and can assure you I know the infinite difference there is between their poetry and mine.

I abandon what I have written to you; criticize, condemn, disapprove, on condition that you will but pardon the two concluding lines. I am warmly interested in their behalf; the thought they contain is so true, so evident, so manifest, that I perceive myself able to defend such a cause against the most rigid criticism, in opposition to hatred and envy, and in despite of detraction.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R VII.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Rheinfelsberg, December 3d, 1736 *.

I Have to-day been agreeably surpris'd by the receipt of your letter, and the pieces with which you have been pleas'd to accompany it. There is not any thing in the world could have given me greater pleasure, for there are no works I read with so much avidity as yours. I only wish that the sovereignty which you grant me, in quality of a thinking being, could enable me to return you real marks of the esteem I have for you, and which it is impossible to avoid having.

I have read the dissertation on the soul which you have address'd to father Tournemine †. Every rational man who cannot believe what he cannot comprehend, and who does not rashly decide on subjects which our feeble reason will not suffer us properly to examine, must always be of your opinion. Certain it is we ne-

* The date in the Berlin edition is December 14th, 1737.

† This dissertation is printed in the *Mélanges Littéraires*, Tome III. page 45.

ver can arrive at the knowledge of first causes. How can we, who are unable to understand whence it happens that two stones struck one against the other emit fire, stand forth and affirm it is impossible God should unite matter and mind? Of one thing I am certain, which is that I am material, and that I think. This argument proves to me the truth of your proposition.

The only knowledge I have of father Tourne mine is the unworthy manner in which he has attacked M. Beaufobre, on his History on Mechanism. With him invective is the substitute of reason, a feeble and a rude resource, which well proves he had nothing better to say.

With respect to my soul, I can assure you, sir, it is very much the humble servant of yours, and ardently wishes it was disengaged from matter that it might take flight and gain instruction at Cirey ;

To that fam'd place at which this soul reveres
Emilia's love, the charms of Voltaire's wit ;
Where Heaven, of favours prodigal, has sent
What grandeur of itself could ne'er bestow.
I have but rank ; gifts more divine are yours,
These cherish, and remember all your blifs.

I shall not say all I think to you, sir, of the pieces you have sent me. The ode, which abounds in beauties, contains nothing but very evident truths ; the epistle to Emily is a wonderful abridgment of the Newtonian system ; and the Mundane, a charming piece which breathes nothing but gaiety, is, if I may venture so to express myself, a true course of ethics. The enjoyment of pure pleasure is the greatest reality the world of man contains. I well comprehend the pleasure of which Montagne speaks, and which never is degraded by any excess or debauch.

I expect the Newtonian philosophy with great impatience, for which I shall be under infinite obligations to you. I well perceive I shall never have any other preceptor than M. de Voltaire. You instruct me in verse, you instruct me in prose ; it must be a most untractable heart that should not be rendered docile by your lessons. I also wait for the Maid of Orleans. I hope she will not be more austere than so many other heroines have been, who have suffered themselves to be overcome by the prayers and perseverance of their lovers.

I have received two packets from you, the present, sir, is the third ; I have sent answers to the two first. I afterward addressed some verses

to you, and this is my fourth letter; an answer to which I wait. The reason of these delays, in part, is occasioned by the slowness of the posts of Germany; beside that my letters make a great circuit, as they pass through Paris to arrive at Champagne. If you know any shorter road I beg you will inform me; I should be happy to take the shortest. The indblence of the transcriber is the reason why I have not yet sent you the Wolfian philosophy; but, it shall indubitably soon be finished.

You are too much above praise for me to bestow it; but, at the same time, too much the friend of truth to be offended when you hear it. Permit me, therefore, sir, to reiterate all the esteem I have for you. My praises shall be confined to saying that I know you. Oh! that all the earth knew you as well! And, oh that I may one day behold him whose wit is the delight of my life!

I am, with true respect,

SIR,

Your very affectionate friend,

LETTER VIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Berlin, December, 1736,

I OWN I felt a secret joy at hearing you were in Holland, and at thus obtaining an easier mode to hear from you; though I fear, from the manner in which you indicate your being there, that there is some vexatious reason which has obliged you to quit France, and live incognito. Be assured, sir, the secret shall not transpire by any indiscretion of mine.

France and England are the only two kingdoms in which the arts are held in respect, and thither other nations ought to go for instruction. Those who cannot repair to them in person may, at least, extract knowledge and information from the writings of their celebrated authors. Their languages consequently will merit to be studied by foreigners, and particularly the French, which, according to me, has peculiar grace, in its elegance, its art, and the energy of its phrases. These were sufficient motives to induce me to apply myself to that language, and I find myself

self richly rewarded for my trouble, by the approbation which you, with so much indulgence, grant me.

Louis XIV. was, in a multitude of respects, a great prince. A solecism, or an error of orthography, could in no degree tarnish the splendor of his fame, established by the numerous actions by which he has been immortalized. He might with propriety, in every sense, say *Cæsar est supra grammaticam*. But there are individual instances which are not generally applicable, and this is one of the number. That which was an imperceptible defect in Louis XIV. would become unpardonable negligence in any other king.

I am not great in any thing; my own application alone can render me, at some future time, serviceable to my country: and this is the only renown of which I am ambitious. The arts and sciences have ever been the children of prosperity; the countries in which they have flourished have had incontestable advantages over those which nourish barbarism in obscurity. But, exclusive of the felicity to which the sciences contribute, I should think myself exceedingly happy to be able to introduce them into our distant climates, where hitherto they have made but small progress. Like connoisseurs in painting,

ing, who can judge of pictures, and are acquainted with the great masters, but who never had knowledge enough to mix up colours, I am struck by and esteem whatever is beautiful, but am not the less ignorant. I seriously fear, sir, lest you should conceive an opinion of me too highly to my advantage. A poet willingly yields to the fire of his fancy, and it might easily happen that you might form a phantom, to whom you might attribute a thousand qualities, which never had any existence, except in the fertility of your own imagination.

You have, no doubt, read *Alaric*, a poem; by M. de Scuderi, which, if I do not mistake, begins with the following line :

*Je chante le vainqueur des vainqueurs de la terre.**

This was certainly every thing that could have been said ; but unfortunately the poet stopped there, and the grand idea which the reader had formed of his hero diminishes at every page. I am very apprehensive of being in the same predicament ; and I will own to you, sir, of all rivers I prefer those infinitely the most which, gliding silently from their sources, increase in their course, at the end of which their big waves

* The conqu'ror of earth's conquerors I sing.

roll similar to those of the sea into which they pour their waters.

At length I perform my promise, and take this opportunity of sending you a part of the metaphysics of Wolf; the remainder shall soon follow. A friend whom I love and esteem has, out of friendship for me, undertaken the translation, which is very exact and faithful. He would have corrected the style if indispensable business had not torn him from me. I have taken care to mark the principal passages. I flatter myself the work will meet your approbation: it cannot but be pleasing to a mind so correct.

The proposition of the *simple being*, which is a kind of atom, or the monad of which Leibnitz speaks, will perhaps appear to you a little obscure. In order the better to understand it, attention must previously be paid to the definitions of the author, concerning space, extent, limitation and figure.

The great order which is observed, and that intimate connection which unites all the propositions with each other, are, in my opinion, the most admirable parts of the book. The manner in which the author reasons is applicable to every kind of subject. It may be of great service to the politician, who shall know how to
use

use it properly. I even dare venture to affirm, it is adapted to every subject which occurs in private life.

Far from blinding me to the beautiful, I have been furnished with still more powerful motives for granting it my approbation, by reading the labours of M. Wolf,

I wait with equal impatience for your works in verse and prose. The gratitude which I already owe you, sir, you continue greatly to increase. You may bestow your productions on more enlightened persons, but never on any by whom they will be more esteemed. The fame you have acquired is above praise, but the admiration I feel will not suffer me to be silent. I perceive so much modesty in the manner in which you speak of your own works, that I fear lest I should shock it, by uttering only a part of the truth.

I confess I have a great desire to see and be acquainted with you, sir, as the most accomplished person which the age and France have produced. Philosophy however teaches me to curb my wishes. The consideration of your health, informed as I am that your constitution is delicate, and your private affairs, added to another motive which you may have not to travel into these parts, are sufficient reasons with me not to press
you

you on the subject. I love my friends with disinterested friendship, and should, on all occasions, prefer their interest to my own satisfaction. I am contented to remember you leave me to hope I shall meet you some time in my life. I will enjoy your correspondence in lieu of your presence; and this correspondence, I hope, may now be carried on with greater facility, from the greater convenience of writing by the post. When you write, in answer to this, be pleased to address your letter to M. von Borck, colonel in the Prussian service at Wesel.

Let me intreat you, sir, to inform me when you intend to quit Holland to go to England. In this case you may remit your letters to our Envoy Borck. I suffer much at seeing a man of your merit a victim to the malignity of mankind. The distance at which I am ought to induce you to regard my suffrage as the suffrage of posterity. How trifling, how melancholy, is this consolation! Yet such has been that of all the great men, your predecessors, who have suffered that hatred which the mean and the envious ever bear to superior genius. Ill-informed people easily are seduced by the malice of the wicked; like those hounds, which continually follow the leader of the pack, bark when they hear him

bark, and when he is thrown out with him are off their scent.

Whoever is enlightened by truth rids himself of human prejudices, discovers and detests them, and unmasks and abhors detraction. Be assured, sir, that these considerations will always induce me to do you justice. I shall continually believe you are still yourself, and warmly interest myself in whatever relates to you. Holland, a country which never displeased me, will become my holy land while you reside there; my good wishes will attend you every where, and the esteem I have for you, being founded on your merit, never can cease, till it shall please the Creator to put an end to my existence. Such are the sentiments with which I am,

SIR,

Your entirely affectionate friend.

I have addressed three letters and a parcel for you to Thiriot, for which I beg you to send.

LET-

LETTER IX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

Leyden, January, 1737.

WERE I unhappy I soon should find consolation. I am informed that your royal highness has deigned to send me your picture. Next to the honour of enjoying the sight of you, this of all things is to me the most flattering. But how has the painter, by portraying your features, been able to express the exalted features of the mind to which I render homage? I am informed that M. Chambrier has been to the post-office and taken the picture, but that the marchioness du Châtelet (Emily) immediately wrote to let him know this treasure was destined for Cirey. She claims it, sir; for she partakes of the admiration with which I contemplate your royal highness. She will not suffer a pledge so precious to be carried off, and one that will constitute the chief ornament of the charming house she has built in her desert. There the short inscription will be read—*Vultus Augusti, mens Trajani.*

According to appearances, sir, the rumour of the present with which I have been honoured by you has made it supposed I am in Prussia. So all the newspapers affirm. It is afflicting to me that, having so well divined my inclinations, they are so ill acquainted with my route. You cannot doubt, sir, of the extreme desire I have to admire you at a distance less great; but I have already informed you of the indispensable occupation which detains me here. It is to render myself more worthy of your bounties that I am now at Leyden, and to acquire further knowledge of subjects in which you most delight. You love nothing but truth; of this I am at present in search. I shall take the liberty to send your royal highness the small store which I may gather, and you will at a glance discover the good fruit from the bad.

In the mean time, if your royal highness shall please to amuse yourself by a short continuation of the Mundane, this I shall very soon have the honour to send you. It is a trifling essay of mundane morality, in which I endeavour, with some gaiety, to prove that luxury, magnificence, the arts, and all which constitute the splendor of a kingdom, constitute its wealth; and that those who exclaim against what they call luxury seldom are any other than the ill-humoured poor.

I think

I think it possible to enrich a kingdom by affording many pleasures to its inhabitants. If this be an error, it has hitherto appeared to me a very agreeable one. But I shall wait the opinion of your royal highness, to know how I ought to think. It is only from pure humanity that I counsel the pursuit of pleasure. My pleasures are little else than study and solitude. But there are a thousand ways to be happy, in every one of which you merit so to be, and that so you should be is my continual wish.

L E T T E R X.

From the Prince Royal.

Berlin, January, 1737.

NO, sir, it was not my portrait that I sent you; such an idea never entered my mind. My portrait has neither sufficient beauty nor is it sufficiently rare to be sent to you. The supposition has originated in mistake. I sent you a trifle, sir, as a mark of my esteem; a bust of Socrates, worked on the head of a cane; and the manner in which the cane was packed up, which was the same in which the canvases of pictures is rolled, gave rise to error. The bust was in every respect more worthy of being sent to

you than my portrait. It is the image of the greatest man of all antiquity, a man who is the glory of the heathen world, and has hitherto been an object of jealousy and envy to Christians. Socrates was persecuted by detraction; and where is the great man who is not? His mind, in love with truth, revives in you. You alone merit to preserve the bust of that celebrated philosopher. I hope, sir, you will be kind enough to send for it, with some letters which I have written to you, and which I imagine may be remitted at the same time.

The marchioness du Chatelet does me great honour, to appear to interest herself in behalf of my supposed portrait. She is in danger of giving me a better opinion of myself than I ever had before, or than I ever ought to have. I have more reason to wish for her portrait. But I own to you that the charms of her mind have occasioned me to forget her form. You will perhaps say this is to think too much like a philosopher for a man of my age; but you may be deceived. The distance of the object, and the impossibility of possession, may have as much to do in the affair as philosophy, which ought not to render us insensible, nor to prevent us having affectionate hearts; for philosophy would then bring more evil than good upon mankind.

It should seem, in effect, some familiar demon has been conversing with all the news writers of Holland, that they should thus unanimously affirm you have been on a visit to me. I was first informed of this by the public papers, which made me begin to doubt of the reality of the fact. I immediately said to myself you would not employ news writers to announce your journey; and, had it happened that you had meant to do me the pleasure to come here, I should have received more certain information. The public believes me more fortunate than I am, and I waste my breath in endeavouring to undeceive the public. However, I am highly obliged to the news writer for having accomplished that, in idea, which he has very truly imagined might, in reality, be infinitely agreeable to me.

Although you have no manner of need to increase your knowledge by studying the sciences anew, I imagine that the conversation of the famous s'Gravesande may be very agreeable to you. He must be in possession of the Newtonian philosophy in its last state of perfection. Nor will the physician Boerhaave be less useful to you, if you should consult him on the state of your health, which I recommend you, sir, to do. Naturally inclined to preserve your body, let me intreat you to increase those atten-

tions you already pay to your health for the love of a friend who warmly interests himself in whatever relates to you. I dare venture to inform you I know your worth, and the greatness of the loss which the world would sustain by losing you. The regret which might be paid to your memory would to you be useless, and even superfluous in those by whom it might be felt. I foresee and I dread the misfortune, but I wish it to be a distant one.

You will give me great pleasure, sir, by sending me your new productions, of which I am very impatiently in expectation. The good tree always brings forth good fruit. Your *Henriade* and your other immortal works are the pledges of the beauties of those which are to come. I am very desirous to see the continuation of the *Mundane*, which you have been kind enough to promise me. The plan which you have indicated is drawn according to truth and reason. In reality, the wisdom of the Almighty could not create any thing in vain. It is the will of God that man should enjoy what he bestows, and to act otherwise would be but to counteract the intention of the Deity. Abuse and excess are only capable of rendering that evil which is in itself good. My morality, sir, is very accordant with yours. I own that I love
pleasure,

pleasure, and all which contributes to pleasure. The brevity of life bids me make haste to enjoy. We are allowed but a certain space of time, by which we ought to profit. This, in itself, is no dangerous principle; though it is necessary that no false consequences should be deduced from it. I expect your essay on morality will be the history of my own thoughts.

Although my greatest pleasure is study, and the cultivation of the fine arts, you, sir, better than any person, know how much they require repose, tranquillity, and a collected mind.

Far from the noisy crowd the god retired,
Whene'er some mighty theme his bosom fired,
And on the distant hill his lyre he strung,
And to the sister Muses sweetly sung.

To suitors coy, except the chosen few,
The sister Muses, well Apollo knew,
Delight in peace, delight the vain to shun,
By numerous labours only to be won.

Immortal as themselves, the blest Voltaire
Their joys and raptures is allow'd to share.

It is great rashness for a scholar, or, to speak
more properly, a frog of the sacred valley, auda-

ciously to croak in the presence of Apollo. I acknowledge my sin, I make confession, and implore absolution; this the esteem in which I hold you may merit. It is difficult to be silent on certain truths of which the mind is thoroughly persuaded, though at the risk of expressing ourselves well or ill. I am in this predicament, in which you have yourself placed me, consequently you ought to be more indulgent to me than any person.

I am,

With all the respect you so well deserve,

Your very affectionate friend.

L E T T E R XI.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Berlin, January 14, 1737.

YOU have the kindest manner of obliging in the world. I received a packet addressed to me. I knew the seals, opened it, and found Merope. I read, was delighted, admired, and am obliged to increase the gratitude I owe you, and which I had supposed incapable of augmentation.

tation. Merope is one of the finest tragedies that has ever been written. The progress of the piece is very artful ; terror increases at each scene, and I was charmed by the maternal tenderness which is here the substitute of the passion of love. I must own that the voice of nature appeared to me infinitely more pathetic than that of so frivolous a passion. The verses abound in noble expressions, and the sentiments are dignified. In fine, the fable, the moral conduct of the piece, the preservation of probability, and the denouement, all are as happily accomplished as can be wished. Of all the men in the world, you alone are capable of writing a piece so perfect as Merope. I am in raptures, in ecstasies, and I should never have done, were it not for the apprehension of offending your modesty.

Though I cannot pay you in your own coin, I nevertheless wish to afford you some proof of my gratitude ; and I intreat you will preserve the ring which I send you, as a token of the pleasure which has been given me by your incomparable tragedy. Had you never written any thing but Merope, this play alone would have been sufficient to make your name known to ages the most remote ; but you have com-

posed works enough to immortalise twenty great men, each of whom would have fame sufficient.

You have very sensibly obliged me by the attention which you have paid me on every new occasion. I must ever remain in your debt, and am angry at myself because of my inability to testify the whole of those sentiments, and that esteem, with which I am,

Your very faithful, affectionate friend.

Do not forget to say a thousand kind things, in my behalf, to the incomparable Emily. There are some errors of the copyist in Merope, which I will mark and send on the first opportunity, that you may be kind enough to correct them for me. Cefario is not yet arrived: it must be confessed that love is a great master.

L E T T E R XII.

From M. de Voltaire.

February, 1737.

THE laurel wither'd on th' expiring tree,
The Arts all languish'd, and the Virtues fled,
While Av'rice blindfold, and disloyal Fraud,
Seated with kings, had seiz'd the bolt of Jove.
Nature,

Nature, indignant at the sight, exclaim'd,
 "Ye nations hear ! As fortunate as just,
 "A hero shall be born, who blest'd by me
 "Shall sing like Maro, like Augustus reign,
 "Of kings the model, and of earth the pride."

She spake, the north pole to the centre shook ;
 The gods assembling run, fair Truth descends,
 The myrtle, olive, and the laurel bloom,
 And Frederick appears !

Let not your modesty, sir, be offended by this little flight of enthusiasm, the effect of that veneration, that great tenderness, of which my heart is sensible.

I have received some charming letters from your royal highness, and verses such as were written by Catullus, in the age of Cæsar. Are you determined then to excel in every thing ?

I hear, at last, it was Socrates and not Frederick that your royal highness bestowed upon me. Let me repeat, sir, I detest the persecutors of Socrates, without much troubling myself concerning the flat-nosed sage.

What's Socrates to me ? Be Frederick mine.

How great is the difference between an Athe-
 2 nian

nian babbler, with his familiar demon, and a prince who is the delight of mankind, and who shall restore happiness to the world !

I have met with some persons from Berlin at Amsterdam : *Fruere famâ tui, Germanice*. They speak of your royal highness in transport. I question every body I meet concerning you. I say—*Ubi est Deus meus ? Deus tuus*, they reply, possesses the finest regiment in all Europe; *Deus tuus* excels in the arts, and the gentle pleasures; he has more knowledge than Alcibiades, plays on the flute like Telemachus, and is superior to both the Greeks. Hearing this, I exclaim, with good old Simeon,

When shall my eyes behold the Saviour of my life * ?

I should before have sent your royal highness the philosophy which has been promised, and the Maid of Orleans, which has *not* been promised ; but first, sir, be assured I have not yet had a moment to myself ; secondly, you must understand that the maid and the philosopher are both committed to hemlock † ; and, in the

* The text alluded to is “ For mine eyes have seen thy “salvation.” T.

† Vont tout droit à la ciguë.

third place, doubt not, sir, that the curiosity which you excite in Europe, as being at the same time a prince and a thinking being, continually occasions all eyes to be upon you.

Our words and actions are watched; every enquiry is made; all is known.

There are some charming verses in the world which are attributed to Augustus-Virgil-Frederic; and Tournemine exclaims

“ The form immense beholding, he shall say,

“ Yes, matter thinks !”

Your royal highness did not send me this ! How then do I know it ? Be assured, sir, that each foreign minister, however much attached he may be to you, and however amiable in himself, will sacrifice every thing to the trifling merit of relating news to his superiors, by whom he is employed. This being premised, I shall send the packet which I venture to address to your royal highness to Wesel. Permit me once more to repeat, like Lucretius to Memmius.

Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.

This line ought to be the motto of the work. You are the only Prince on earth to whom I should

should dare to send it. Look upon me, sir, as the most faithful of your subjects; for I have, and will have, no other master. After having so said, decide for yourself.

I shall immediately leave Holland, in despite of myself; friendship recalls me to Cirey; a person is arrived here who has roused me from my slumbers. The greatest prince on earth is become my confidant. Should your royal highness have any commands, I intreat you will address them to M. du Breuil, at Amsterdam, who will send them to me. They will come late to hand, for which reason, in my complaints against Providence, there will be found a long article on the extreme injustice of not having placed Cirey in Prussia.

I am, Sir,

Indulge me with the expression,

With the most tender veneration, &c,

LET.

LETTER XIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Berlin, February, 1737 *.

IT was with great pleasure that I received *La Défence du Mondain*, and your pleasant verses on the subject of the pope's mule. Each of these pieces is charming in its kind. The false zeal of your devout neighbour is exceedingly characteristic of many persons, who, stupid in their holiness, tax every body with sins, while they themselves are blind to their own vices. Nothing can be more happy than the transition to the wine with which your zealot moistens his throat, grown dry by the heat of disputation. The poor who lives on the vanity of the great, the gods, who, in the time of Tullus, were of wood, and of gold, under the consulship of Lucullus, &c. are all passages, the beauties of which make large strides toward immortality.

* The Berlin edition dates January 23. T.

But

But may I be allowed, sir, to mention my doubts? By so doing, I shall gain instruction from the excellent reasons with which you will certainly remove them. Is the epithet chimerical allowable, when applied to the Roman history, which is confirmed by the testimony of so many authors, so many respectable monuments of antiquity, and an infinity of medals, a part of which only would be necessary to establish the truths of religion.

Standards of hay among the Romans are to me unknown; my ignorance must be my excuse; but, from what I can recollect of history, the first standards among the Romans were hands, fastened to the ends of poles.

In me, sir, you see a disciple who asks instruction, at the same time that you see a sincere friend who acts with frankness, and hopes your just and penetrating mind will easily perceive that it is my friendship alone which speaks. Let me intreat you to treat me after the same manner. I confess my reflections are rather those of a mathematician than the remarks of a poet.

With respect to the esteem I have for you, that is so perfect that it must ever continue the same.

I am, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XIV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Rheinsberg, February 8, 1737.

DO not give yourself any trouble concerning the rumour which is spread of the correspondence between us; such a rumour can neither be painful to you nor me. True it is that there are superstitious persons, many of whom are here to be found, and perhaps more than in other parts, who have thought it scandalous that I should hold any such correspondence. These persons beside suspect I do not rigorously adhere to every thing which they call articles of faith. They have been so highly prejudiced by the calumnies to which your enemies give utterance, with every degree of malignity, that these good bigots very devoutly damn all who prefer you to Luther and Calvin, and who are so intolerably *stiff-necked* as to dare to write to you. That I might release myself from all importunity, I thought the best way would be
to

to let the gazette writer of Holland and Amsterdam understand I should be obliged to him not to mention me in any manner.

Such, sir, is the truth of every thing that has happened, and in which you may confide. I can assure you that I honour myself for my own esteem of you, and that I think it a glory to pay homage to your genius. I would even consent to have all the passages in my letters, in which I have spoken of you, printed; to testify to the eyes of the whole world, that I do not blush to ask information from a man who deserves to be my tutor, and who has no defect, except that of being superior to the rest of mankind. But, sir, you have no need of a witness so feeble to confirm a fame which you yourself have so well established. The foundation you have laid is more noble and more secure than any that could be built on my suffrages.

In any other age except that in which we live, I should not have forbidden the sieur Franchin to speak of me in whatever manner he should please. He would never risk becoming the Bajazet of mount Saint Michael. It was a rule dictated by prudence; and you know, sir, we must cede to circumstances, and accommodate ourselves to the times. I saw myself obliged to put it in practice.

You

You received the verses I addressed to you with so much indulgence that I have ventured to send you an ode on oblivion. The subject has not, to my knowledge, ever been touched. I request, sir, you will read it with all the inflexibility of a master, and all the rigid severity of a critic. I shall gain instruction by your corrections, which will be to me so many precepts, dictated by Apollo himself, and inspired by the Muses.

You will oblige me, sir, by noticing your doubts concerning the metaphysics of Wolf. I shall soon send you the remainder of the work. I imagine you will attack him on the definition which he gives of the *simple being*.

There is a work on ethics, written by this author, and the subject is treated in the same order which is observed in his metaphysics. The propositions are intimately connected one with the other, and, if I may so be allowed to say, mutually take hands to strengthen each other. A person of the name of Jordan, whom you must have seen at Paris, has undertaken the translation. He has forsaken Saint Paul, in favour of Aristotle.

Wolf, at the end of his metaphysics, shews the existence of a soul, distinct from the body. He thus explains himself on the subject of immortality.

talities. "The soul having been created by God in an instant, and not in any succession of time, God could not annihilate it, except by a formal act of his will." He seems to believe in the eternity of the earth; though he does not speak in terms so clear as might have been desired.

The most evident proposition, according to my feeble intelligence, is that the earth is eternal, relative to time, or relative to a succession of actions; but that God is beyond time, and must have been before all things. The world however is certainly much older than we suppose it to be. If God has willed creation from all eternity, the will and the deed being in him but the same thing, the necessary consequence is that the world is eternal.

I must intreat, sir, you would not ask me what I understand by the word eternal, for I previously confess that I employ a term the meaning of which I do not myself comprehend. Metaphysical questions are not to be resolved by man. We in vain endeavour to divine things which are beyond our conceptions, and in this ignorant world, the most probable conjecture passes for the best system.

Mine is to adore the supreme Being, who alone is good, alone is merciful, and who therefore

fore merits my homage. I soften and alleviate, as much as I have the power, the miseries to which humanity is liable, and in other respects I rely on the will of the Creator, who will dispose of me as he shall see good, and from whom, happen what will, I have nothing to fear. I imagine that such is very nearly your confession of faith.

If reason dictate my words, and if I dare flatter myself the now speaks with my tongue, it is in a manner which is advantageous to you. She renders you justice as the greatest man of France, and as a mortal who does honour to language. If ever I should go to France, the first question I should ask would be, "Where is M. de Voltaire?" Neither the king nor his court, Paris nor Versailles, the fair sex nor pleasure, would have any part in my journey; it would be undertaken for you alone.

Permit me once again to attack you relative to the poem of the Maid of Orleans. If you have confidence enough in me to think me incapable of betraying a man whom I esteem, if you believe me to be a worthy man, you will not refuse my request. The latter is a character I value too highly ever to forfeit it; and those who know me know I am neither indiscreet nor imprudent.

Continue, sir, to instruct the world; the torch of truth could not be confided to better hands. I admire you at a distance, not however renouncing the hope to have the satisfaction of one day seeing you. This you have promised me, and I reserve the right of calling it to your recollection to some future time.

Be assured, sir, of my esteem. I do not grant it lightly, nor lightly withdraw it. Such are the sentiments with which I am,

S I R,

Your ever affectionate friend.

L E T T E R X V .

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Renssberg, February, 1737 *.

I HAVE been agreeably surpris'd, sir, by the verses which you have kindly address'd to me, and which are worthy of their author. The most barren subject becomes fruitful in

* The Berlin edition dates March 6.

your

your hands. You speak of me, and I no longer know myself: all you touch is turned to gold.

Braving oblivion and the taunts of time,
 Immortaliz'd by thee, my name shall live :
 Still, as thy works descend, from age to age,
 The suffrages receiving of posterity,
 Conquering the world, nay conquering envy's
 self,
 With endless renovation shall I rise.
 The temple they in which my statue stands,
 The fame that's due alone to thee partaking.

Who knows whether Alexander the Great would have now been heard of, had not Quintus Curtius, and some famous historians, been careful to write and transmit the history of his life? The valiant Achilles and the sage Nestor might not have escaped the abyss of oblivion, had they not been rendered famous by Homer. I can assure you I neither am a kind of, nor a candidate to become, a great man. I am simply an individual known only to a small part of the continent, and whose name, according to all appearance, will only serve to decorate some genealogical tree, and afterward be consigned to forgetfulness and obscurity.

I am surpris'd at my imprudence, when I reflect on having address'd verses to you. Yet, at the very moment that I disapprove my own temerity, I fall into exactly the same error; Boileau says,

Asses, by nature taught, instinctive bray ;
 Let asses therefore nature's laws obey,
 Nor strive, while sounds discordant they prolong,
 To ape the nightingale's melodious song.

I intreat, sir, you would become my poetical instructor, as you are capable of being in all things. You will never find a disciple with more docility and obedience. Far from being offended at your corrections, I shall understand them as the most certain marks of that friendship which you entertain for me. I am so totally at leisure that I have time to occupy myself with any science I shall please. I endeavour to profit by this indolence which I attempt to transform into wisdom, by my application to the study of philosophy and history, and by amusing myself with poetry and music. I live at present like a man, and think such a life infinitely preferable to the majestic gravity and the tyrannic constraint of courts. I do not love a kind
 of

of existence which is measured by the yard; freedom only has any charms for me.

Prejudiced persons perhaps have drawn a picture of me too much to my advantage: their friendship has supplied my want of merit. Recollect, I entreat you, sir, the description which you have given of fame.

With lips of levity, the babbler Fame
Alike is prodigal of truth or lies,

When persons of a certain rank do but half fulfil their duties, the prize is adjudged to them which others are not permitted to receive till the work is fully accomplished. Whence can this strange difference arise? Either we are less capable than others of doing what we ought, or vile flattery exalts our least actions above their worth.

Augustus, late king of Poland, could calculate a series of figures in arithmetic with tolerable facility, and every body was very eager to vaunt of his superior skill in the mathematics; though he was even ignorant of the elements of algebra.

Excuse me from citing other examples, which easily might be cited.

There has been no monarch of the present age really well informed, the czar Peter I. ex-

cepted. He was not only the legislator of his country, he was perfectly acquainted with maritime affairs. He was architect, anatomist, surgeon (sometimes a dangerous one), an expert soldier, and a consummate œconomist. Had he but received a less barbarous, less ferocious, education than that which a country could afford where absolute authority was conspicuous only in acts of cruelty, he might then have become a model for all future monarchs.

I was assured you were an amateur of paintings; this was what determined me to send you the head of Socrates, the workmanship of which is tolerable. I request you will remain satisfied with my intention.

I wait very impatiently for the maid and the philosopher, who are both *committed to bemlock*. I assure you I will keep inviolable secrecy on the subject: no person shall know that you have sent me the two works, and much less shall they be seen. I will make this a point of honour. I cannot say more, feeling, as I do, how unworthy it would be to betray a friend whom I esteem and by whom I am obliged, through my own indiscretion. Foreign ministers are privileged spies. My confidence is neither blind nor destitute of foresight on that subject.

Where could you obtain the epigram that I wrote on M. La Croze? I gave it to nobody but himself. The good large man of learning was himself the cause of this sport, this folly of imagination, the point of which consists in a quibble, trivial enough, and which might be overlooked when the circumstances were not known, and which in other respects was very insipid. The work of father Tournemine is in the French library, where it was read by M. La Croze. He hates the Jesuits as Christians hate the Devil, and esteems no religious order except those of the congregation of Saint Maurice, one of whom he himself was.

You have left Holland!—I shall feel this increase of distance. Your letters will become still greater rarities, and a thousand vexatious impediments will concur to render the arrival of them less frequent. I shall profit by the address which you have given me of the sieur du Breuil, and shall very strongly recommend it to him to hasten the departure of my letters, and the return of yours as much as possible.

May you enjoy every delight of life at Cirey! Your happiness never will equal my wishes in your behalf, nor your own merits. I beg you will inform the marchioness du Chatelet that she

she is the only person who could make me resolve to give up M. de Voltaire, as she is the only person who is worthy of his company. Were Cirey at the farther part of the world, I would not renounce the satisfaction of one day going thither. Kings have been known to travel on more trifling occasions, and I assure you my curiosity is equal to my esteem. Is it astonishing that I should be desirous to see the man most worthy of immortality, and whose own efforts have made him immortal?

I am,

With all imaginable esteem,

You very affectionate friend,

I have just received letters from Berlin, in which I am informed that the emperor's resident has a printed copy of the Maid of Orleans. Do not accuse me of indiscretion,

L E T.

LETTER XVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

March, 1737.

I KNOW not where to begin; I am intoxicated with pleasure, surprise, and gratitude.

Pollio et ipse facit nova carmina, pascite taurum.

You write verses in French, at Berlin, such as were written at Versailles, in the times of good taste, and the reign of pleasure. You send me the metaphysics of M. Wolf, and I venture to say that your royal highness is greatly suspected of having translated the work yourself. You send M. de Borck hither, to the abode of solitude, and you know how dear a man must be to me who is worthy of your favours. I receive four letters at once from your royal highness; and add to all this the bust of Socrates is at Cirey. I am dazzled with this excess of treasure; it is with difficulty that I can collect myself sufficiently to return you thanks. The great passions will speak first, and my greatest, sir, are for you and poetry.

In

In you great Alcibiades revives,
 His virtues blooming, buried his defects ;
 Socrates' friend, of Anitus the foe,
 You curses from a bigot priest condemn !

No Oracle will e'er pronounce me sage;
 No Socrates am I : and ah ! too far,
 Too distant he, the sovereign of my soul !
 My Alcibiades, whose potent arm,
 Or soon or late, from Hemlock-Anitus,
 And bigot priest, will certain refuge grant,
 Who else might grasp the consecrated knife,
 And shed my blood in most religious zeal.

Augustus formerly wrote verses for Horace, and for Virgil, sir ; but Augustus has disgraced himself by his proscriptions. Charles IX. composed poetry, and poetry which had merit, for Ronsard ; but Charles IX. was guilty, at least, of having *permitted* what was even worse than proscriptions, the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. I can only compare you to our Henry the Great, and to Francis I. Your royal highness is no doubt acquainted with the charming song which Henry the Great wrote on his mistress.

From

From Mars I hold my crown,
Of valour the desert;
Accept it from my hand,
You hold it of my heart.

Such were sovereigns models for men as well as for kings, yet these you will surpass. My heart was moved by all which M. de Borck told me of your royal highness, although he told me nothing new.

You must imagine, sir, it was long before I could obtain your letters, because of my journey. They were received by the marchioness du Chatelet, as also was the bust of Socrates. The sieur Thiriot might have obtained the packet from the post-office sooner, but it was in the hands of M. Chambrier, who, imagining it contained your portrait, was, as well he might be, desirous of keeping it. Emily is in despair to find it is only Socrates. The palace of Cirey still lives in hopes of being adorned by the picture of the only prince on earth; at least the only one to us. Emily expects and deserves it, and you are equitable.

M. Thiriot imagined I was going to Prussia, and the fame of your kindness to me persuaded many people it was truth. The news was inserted in the public papers almost a month ago,
but

but the penetration of your own mind would teach your royal highness to understand my character better. I am certain you will do me the justice to remain persuaded that I have an extreme desire to pay my respects to you, but that I never had any intention to go to Prussia. I am incapable of taking any such step without a precise order.

The court of the king your father, and your royal highness, well may attract strangers; but a man of letters who is attached to you ought not to go without being commanded.

A month ago I certainly did not imagine I should have left Cirey. Madame du Chatelet, of whom and of your royal highness it may surely be said you are kindred souls, and between whom there is a pre-ordained harmony, ought to have detained me in her court, which without hesitation I prefer to that of all the kings on earth, as friend, philosopher, and free man; for

*Fuge suspicari
Cujus octavum trepidavit ætas
Claudere lustrum.*

But a storm arose and swept me from this happy retreat; detraction came in search of me as
far

far as Cirey. I am persecuted, since I have written the *Henriade*. Would you believe that I have been more than once reproached for having depicted the massacre of Saint Bartholomew in colours too black; I am called atheist because I have said men are not born for mutual destruction. In fine, the tempest grew louder, and, following the advice of my best friends, I departed. I had made a sketch of the easy principles of the Newtonian philosophy. Madam du Chatelet had her part in the work: Minerva dictated, and I wrote. I came to Leyden to labour, and render the work less unworthy of her and you; and repaired to Amsterdam to have it printed and the plates engraved. This will continue in hand all winter. Such is my history, and such my occupation. The kindness of your royal highness required the confession.

That I might avoid visits, new acquaintance, and loss of time, I assumed another name when I came to Holland; but the gazettes having invented injurious rumours, which were first circulated by my enemies, I immediately resolved to confound them, and give them the lie by making myself known.

I have not yet had time to read the whole of the metaphysics which you have deigned to send

me; the little I have read appears to me a chain of gold descending from heaven to earth. True it is, there are some links so loose that we fear lest they should break, yet they have been formed with so much art that I admire them, however fragile they may be.

I very well perceive it is possible to combat that kind of pre-established harmony to which M. Wolf wishes to come, and that many things may be said against his system; but no objection can be made to his virtue and his genius. To tax him with atheism and immorality, in fine, to persecute him, appears to me absurd. The theologians of all countries, who are people intoxicated by sacred chimeras, resemble the cardinals who condemned Galileo. Do they not desire to burn M. Wolf alive, because he is superior to them in understanding? Guardian angel of Wolf and of reason, great prince, vast and apt genius, cannot a glance from you awe the fools to silence?

In the letters which I have received from your royal highness, among many other traits worthy the prince and the philosopher, I remarked that where you said *Cæsar est supra grammaticam*. This is very true; it becomes a prince not to
be

be a purist *, but it does not become him to write and spell like a woman. A prince ought to have received the best of educations of every kind ; and when I am told that Louis XIV. was ignorant and incapable of writing his mother tongue, I conclude that he was ill educated. He was born with a clear and good understanding ; but he was taught only to dance and play on the guitar. He never read, for if he had, and if he had been acquainted with history, you would not have seen so many French refugees at Berlin ; your kingdom would not have been enriched in the year 1686 with the spoils of his ; he would have paid less attention to the jesuit Le Tellier ; he would have, &c. &c. &c.

Either your education has been worthy of your genius. sir, or you have educated yourself. There is not at present a prince on earth who thinks like you. I am very sorry you have no rivals. While I have life I shall be, &c.

* A term among the French to express an excess of delicacy in grammar, pronunciation, and phraseology. T.

L E T T E R XVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

March, 1737.

DELICIE HUMANI GENERIS,

THIS title is more dear to you than those of lord, royal highness, and majesty; nor is it less your due.

My first duty will be to render an account of my proceedings to your royal highness, for I am your declared subject. We catholics have a kind of sacrament which we call confirmation. We select a saint to be our patron in heaven, and a species of tutelary deity to us. I should be glad to know why I am permitted to choose one of the minor gods rather than a king. You are certainly much better formed to be my king than Saint Francis of Assise, or Saint Dominic are to be my saints. To my king, therefore, I write, and I inform you, *Rex amate*, that I am returned to your little province of Cirey, where philosophy, the Graces, freedom and study dwell; nothing is wanting there except the portrait of your majesty. This you will not grant;
you

you will not suffer us to have images that we should adore ; you remember the holy text.

I have at length received the Socrates which your royal highness deigned to send me as a present. This present induced me once again to read all that Plato has said of Socrates. I am still of my former opinion.

The days of ancient Greece I own were bright,
But they're eclips'd, now Frederic sees the light,
Berlin may soon surpass th' Athenian age,
For Frederic has surpass'd th' Athenian sage.

Equally free from vulgar prejudice, and as modest as the Grecian was vain, you will not go to one of the Lutheran churches, there to publish yourself the wisest of all mankind ; you will rather confine yourself to the performance of all that can make you so ; you will not proceed from house to house, like Socrates, and say to the master, sir, you are a fool ; to the preceptor, sir, you are an ass ; and to the child, you are an ignorant little blockhead ; you will be satisfied with thinking all this of the generality of those animals called men, and will notwithstanding exert yourself to render them happy:

I have to answer the criticisms which your

royal highness has deigned to make, in one of your letters, relative to the ancient Romans, who, in the fields of Mars, formerly bore hay for their standard.

The colonel of the finest regiment in Europe finds it painful to allow that the conquerors of the sixth part of our continent had not always golden eagles borne before their armies; but all things have a beginning. When the Romans were only peasants, they carried hay as their ensigns; when they were *populum latè regem*, they had golden eagles.

Ovid in his *Fasti* expressly says of the ancient Romans,

*Non illos cælo labentia signa movebant,
Sed sua quæ magnum perdere crimen erat.*

A ridiculous antithesis to tell us they were unacquainted with celestial *signs*. They were only acquainted with the *signs* of their armies. He continues to say, speaking of these signs, or of these ensigns,

*Illaque de fæno; sed erat reverentia fæno
Quantaque nunc aquilas cernis habere tuas.
Pertica suspensos portabat longa maniplos:
Unde manipularis nomina miles habet.*

Here

Here are my wisps of hay well proved.

With respect to the ancient periods of their history, I shall refer to your royal highness, as I shall respecting all ancient periods. What think you of Remus and Romulus, the sons of the god Mars; of the she-wolf; of the wood-pecker; of the bleeding head of a man which occasioned the capitol to be built; of the gods of Lavinium, that travelled on foot from Alba to Lavinium; of the combat between Castor and Pollux at the lake of Nigillo; of Artilius Nævius, who cut stones with a razor; of the vestal who drew a ship with her girdle; of the palladium; of the bucklers that fell from heaven; in fine, of Mutius Scevola; of Lucretia; of the Horatii; of Curtius; stories not less chimerical than the miracles I have just mentioned? We must assign all these, sir, their places in the hall of Odin, with our holy vial, the shift of the Virgin Mary, the sacred prepuce, and the legends of the Monks.

I am informed that your royal highness has lately done justice to M. Wolf. You will immortalize your name, and will render it dear to all ages, by protecting enlightened philosophy against the absurd and caballing theologian. Continue, great prince, great man, to trample on the monster of superstition and fanaticism;

that real enemy of the Deity and of reason. Be you the king of philosophers; other monarchs are only the kings of men.

I daily return thanks to Heaven that you are in being. Louis XIV. whose history I have the honour to send your royal highness in manuscript, passed the latter years of his life in miserable disputes concerning a ridiculous bull, in behalf of which he interested himself, without knowing why; he died bandied from priest to priest, and these priests anathematized each other with the most furious and frantic zeal. To such dangers are princes exposed. Ignorance, the mother of superstition, renders them the victims of bigots. The knowledge of which you are possessed renders you invulnerable to their attacks.

I have read the metaphysics of Wolf with great attention. Will your royal highness permit me to give utterance to my thoughts? Either I am deceived, or you have deigned to translate the book yourself. I have read little corrections in your own writing. Emily has read it with me.

From rising Athens was this treasure sent :
Versailles the courtly knows not of the gift,
And in her ignorance merits to remain.

This

This Emily, deserving of Frederic, here joins in admiration and respect for the only prince whom she thinks worthy to be a prince; for which reason her vexation at not possessing the portrait of your royal highness is the greater. Some things have been made ready according to your orders. I send this packet immediately to the master of the post-office of Treves, without passing by Paris; it will proceed thence to Wesel. Deign to give me your commands, if you wish I should continue to pursue this method.

I am,

With profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R XVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Remusberg, April 7th, 1737.

EVEN the very manner in which you affix your seals is an obliging pledge of the attention you pay me. You speak to me in very flattering language; you load me with praises; you bestow titles on me, which appertain only

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to

to great men; and I sink under the weight of your eulogies. The limits of my empire, sir, would be very confined, were my empire only to consist of men equal to you in merit. Are kings necessary to govern philosophers? Can the ignorant become the conductors of the enlightened? Or may men who are the slaves of their passions overawe the vices of men, who, themselves, are able to suppress vice; not by the fear of chastisement, not by the puerile dread of hell and demons, but by the love of virtue? Reason is your guide and your sovereign; Henry the Great is your protecting saint; any foreign aid would be superfluous.

If, however, from the situation in which I am placed, I shall find myself capable of convincing you of the sentiments I entertain for M. de Voltaire, you will obtain a saint in me whom you never shall invoke in vain. I shall begin by affording you a small proof. You appear to desire to have my portrait; yes, it is your will, and I have immediately ordered it to be painted. To convince you how highly the arts are honoured among us, know, sir, there is no science which we do not endeavour to ennoble. One of my gentlemen, named Knobelsdorf, who does not confine his talents to the handling of the pencil alone, has painted this portrait.

He

He knows he is working for you, and that you are a connoisseur. This is a sufficient spur to make him emulous to surpass himself.

One of my intimate friends, the baron of Kayserling, or Cefario, will bring you my picture; he will be at Cirey toward the end of the next month, and when you see him you will judge whether he does not deserve the esteem of every worthy man. I intreat, sir, you will place confidence in him. It is part of his charge to press you warmly on the subject of the Maid of Orleans, on the Newtonian philosophy, on the history of Louis XIV. and on all which he can extort from you.

How might I reply to your verses without having at least been born a poet? I am not so blind to myself as to imagine I have talents for versification. To write in a foreign language, to write poetry too, and, which is worse, to know myself rejected by Apollo, is too much.

For rhyming's sake I rhyme; but, tho' the pause
Were rightly plac'd, tho' such inferior laws
Were well observ'd, in vain I still might strive;
Sternhold and Hopkins only would revive.
Yet, when I see thee rise on eagle wing,
Like thee I wish to mount, like thee to sing;

Venturing

Venturing to fly when scarcely I can crawl,
Melted my waxen wings, alas ! I fall.

It must be owned we poets promise much and perform little. At the very moment I was making honourable amends, for all the bad verses I had sent you, I fell into the same error,

May Berlin rival Athens ! I will hope the accomplishment of the prophecy. Should it but be able to acquire M. de Voltaire it could not fail to become one of the most celebrated cities in Europe.

I cede to your reasons, sir ; you have excellently justified your verses. The Romans had wisps of hay by way of standards. I allow it. You enlighten, you instruct, you teach me even to profit by my own ignorance.

Which way could my regiment excite your curiosity ? I am desirous it should be famous for its bravery, and not for its beauty. A regiment ought not to shine by exterior splendour, by vain trappings, pomp, and magnificence. The troops with whom Alexander subjected Greece, and conquered the greatest part of Asia, were accoutred very differently. Iron constituted their only ornament. They were, by long and painful habit, inured to labour ; they were hardened

dened to support hunger, thirst, and all the rigours which are attendant on protracted war; they were intimately formed into one body, by vigorous and severe discipline, so that they all concurred to produce one effect, and were rendered capable to execute the most extensive designs of their generals, with promptitude and energy.

With respect to the remote period of the Roman history, I find myself induced to maintain its truth, and that from a motive which will afford you some surprise. To explain myself, I shall be obliged to be a little circumstantial, endeavouring at the same time to relate my anecdote with as much brevity as possible.

Some years ago, in a manuscript of the Vatican, the history of Romulus and Remus was found, the narration of which was very different to that which had formerly been known. The manuscript asserts that Remus escaped from the pursuit of his brother, and, that he might conceal himself from his jealous fury, he took refuge in the northern provinces of Germany, toward the banks of the Elbe; that he built a city which was situated near a great lake, to which he gave his name, and that after his death he was buried in an island which, rising in the

6 middle

middle of the water; formed a kind of hill, in the centre of the lake.

Four years ago, two monks were sent here from the pope, to discover the city founded by Remus. According to the description I have given, they imagined it must be Remusberg; or, in other words, Mount-Remus. The good fathers dug in the island, and on every side to discover the remains of Remus; but, whether these remains were not preserved with sufficient care, or whether time which destroys all things had turned them to earth, certain it is that they discovered none such.

A tradition, not better proved than the foregoing, tells us that, about a hundred years ago, when laying the foundations of this castle, two stones were found, on which were engraved the history of the flight of the vultures. Although the figures were greatly effaced, still something was to be perceived. Our Gothic ancestors, who unfortunately were very ignorant, and little curious of antiquities, have neglected to preserve these precious monuments of history, and consequently have left us in obscure incertitude, concerning the truth of so important a fact.

Not three months since, some men digging in the garden discovered an urn of Roman coins; but they were so ancient that the marks were al-

most effaced. I sent them to M. La Croze, who conjectured they might appertain to the first or second century.

I hope, sir, you will kindly accept the anecdote I send, and in its behalf will excuse the interest I take in every thing which relates to the history of one of the founders of Rome, whose ashes I imagine I possess. I shall not in other respects be accused of too much incredulity : if I sin it is not from superstition.

Suspecting even that which is probable, I wish to avoid an erroneous creed by the search of truth. The grand and the wonderful too much approach the fabulous, and Truth is known by her simplicity.

The love of truth, and the horror I have for injustice, have occasioned me to take the part of M. Wolf. Naked Truth has little empire over the minds of most men ; in order to shew herself she must be decorated with rank, acquire dignity, and the protection of the great. Ignorance, fanaticism, superstition, and blind zeal, mingled with jealousy, have persecuted M. Wolf. By these have crimes been imputed to him ; but the world at length begins to perceive the dawn of his innocence.

I wish not to arrogate fame to myself which is not my due, nor assume merit from the labours

bours of others. I assure you I have not translated the metaphysics of Wolf; that honour is claimed by one of my friends. A succession of events has led him into Russia, where he has been some months, though he deserved a better fate. I have no other part in the work than that of having occasioned it, and that of making corrections. The copyist has the remainder of the translation, of which I am in daily expectation, and it shall soon be sent you.

To be remembered by Emily is very flattering: I beg you to assure her she holds a very distinguished place in my sentiments.

For Europe ranks her with her greatest men.

What can I refuse to a Newtonian Venus, where the sublimest sciences are adorned with all the charms of youth, beauty, and grace? The marchioness du Chatelet desires to have my portrait; I rather ought to request hers; but I submit; each stroke of the pencil will prove the admiration I have for her.

I send this letter by favour of the sieur du Breuil Tronchin, according to the direction you have given me. I believe it will be proper to consult measures with the master of the post-office of Treves, for the better regulation of our
little

little correspondence. I shall wait till you have made some arrangements with him on this subject before I shall write to him by that channel. When will the greatest man in France no longer have need of so many precautions? Shall your countrymen alone envy you the glory which is your due? Depart from a country so ungrateful, and come into one where you will be adored, that your genius may some day find a remunerator in this new Athens.

Here thee attending let the fine arts throng,
Thy philosophic treasures hither bring;
The nations of the wise shall round thee swarm,
The quick'ning ways of genius to enjoy.
Our myrtles and our laurels wait unpluck'd,
By fair Emilia's hand entwin'd to be,
And form fresh garlands to bedeck thy brow.
The fight shall make Rousseau th' envenom'd
burst.

Your letters give me infinite pleasure, but I own I should much prefer the satisfaction of conversing with you, and personally assuring you of the perfect esteem with which I shall ever remain, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R X I X .

From M. de Voltaire.

* * * * *

SUCH are the reflections which your royal highness commanded me to make on the ode * with which your royal highness has deigned to embellish French poetry. Suffer me again to repeat my astonishment at the honour you confer on our language. But, without intruding upon your modesty each time I felt admiration, I immediately proceeded to examine each stanza apart.

After having gathered poetical flowers with your royal highness, we must now pass on to the thorns of metaphysics.

I, with your royal highness, admire the vast mind, the precision of method, the art of M. Wolf. I think it shameful to persecute and glorious to protect him, and behold with extreme pleasure that you shield him like a prince, and judge him like a philosopher.

* On Oblivion.

With

With superior understanding, your royal highness has felt the critical, the doubtful point of his metaphysics; which in other respects are admirable. The *Simple Being* of which he speaks gives birth to many difficulties. In article XVI. he says, there are every where simple beings where there are combined beings. His own words are—"If there are no simple beings, the result must be that all the parts of the smallest must consist of other parts; and, as we could then shew no cause from which combined beings could originate, like as we could not comprehend how a number should exist if it did not contain various units. Hence we must finally conceive simple beings, which have given existence to combined beings." Again, in article LXXXI.—"Simple beings possess neither figure nor size, nor can they fill space."

Might we not answer to these assertions——?

1. A combined being is necessarily divisible *ad infinitum*, which is mathematically demonstrated.

2. If it be not physically divisible *in infinitum*, the reason is our instruments are not sufficiently minute; and because the form and generation of things could not subsist, if the first principles of which things are formed divided and decomposed themselves. Divide and decompose the

first germ of man, or of plants, and there would neither be men nor plants. Therefore there must be bodies undivided.

But it does not thence follow that these first germs, these first principles, are in reality indivisible, simple, and without extent; for they would then not be bodies, and we should find that matter was not composed of matter, and that bodies were not composed of bodies; which would be somewhat strange.

What then are the first principles of matter? They are divisible bodies, no doubt; but which shall remain undivided so long as the nature of things shall continue to subsist.

But what will be a sufficient reason for the existence of bodies? The thing can certainly only be conceived after two manners; either bodies are such necessarily, by nature, or they are the work of a free will, of a supreme and free being. There is no optional third opinion. But, let us choose which of these two opinions we please, the difficulties to resolve will be great.

Which is the opinion that I shall embrace? That in which, after a proper estimate, there shall be the fewest absurdities to digest. I find the most contradiction, difficulty, and dilemma, in the system of the necessary existence of
4 matter;

matter; I therefore range myself on the side of those who believe in a supreme being, as the least contradictory, the most probable.

I do not believe any demonstration, properly so called, can be obtained of the existence of that being, independent of matter. I remember I somewhat embarrassed the famous Dr. Clarke, in England, by saying to him—"A train of ideas which continually leaves remaining difficulties cannot be called demonstration." To say that the square constructed on the largest side of a right angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the two other sides, is to speak after demonstration; which, complicated as it may be, leaves no doubt behind. But the existence of a creator leaves difficulties insurmountable by the human mind. Therefore this truth cannot be placed among those which are properly demonstrable. I believe it to be truth, and I believe it because it is the most probable. It is a ray of light shining in a chaos of darkness.

Much more might be said; but to fatigue your royal highness with philosophical reflections would only be carrying gold to the mines of Peru.

The whole of metaphysics, in my opinion, contains two divisions; the first, all which men

of good sense know ; and the second, all which they never will know.

We know, for example, what a simple idea is, and what a complex ; but what the being is which has ideas we never shall know. We measure bodies, but we never understand what matter is. We can only judge of such things by analogy. It is a stick which nature has put into the hands of the blind, and by the aid of which we are able to walk, but liable to fall.

Analogy teaches me that beasts, being organized like me, having sentiments and ideas like me, may very well be what I am. When I wish to proceed farther I come to an abyss, and stop short on the brink of the precipice.

All I know is, that, whether matter be eternal (which is very incomprehensible) whether it has been created in the succession of time (which is subject to many difficulties) whether the soul perish with the body, or whether it be to enjoy immortality, you cannot, under such incertitude, act more wisely, more worthy of yourself, than to bestow on your soul, perishable or not perishable, every virtue, all kind of wisdom, to enjoy all innocent pleasures, to live like a king, a man, and a sage, to be happy yourself and to render others happy.

I contemplate you as a present sent from
heaven

heaven to earth. I admire when I perceive that, at your age, you have not been hurried away by the love of pleasure; and I infinitely congratulate you that philosophy has left you a taste for pleasure. We were not born to do nothing but read Plato and Leibnitz, to measure curves, or to arrange facts in our minds; we have sensations to which we must attend, and passions which we must gratify, without suffering ourselves to be under their dominion.

I am charmed with your ethics. My heart feels it was born to be the subject of yours, and my satisfaction at thinking like you in all things is too great.

Your royal highness did me the honour to inform me, in your last letter, that you regard the late Czar as the greatest man of the past age; and that the esteem which you have for him does not make you blind to his cruelties. He was a great monarch, a legislator, a founder of cities; but, highly as politics may be indebted to him, how great are the reproaches which may be made him by humanity! We admire the king, but we cannot love the man. Be what you are, sir, and you shall be admired and beloved by the whole world.

One of the greatest benefits you can confer on men will be to tread superstition and fan-

ticism under foot, and not to permit a man in a black gown to persecute other men who are not of his opinion. Certain it is that philosophers never trouble the state; wherefore then should the state trouble philosophers? In what did the reason of Bayle injure Holland; or wherefore did the fanatical preacher Jurieu acquire sufficient influence to rob him of his small fortune? Philosophers only ask to live undisturbed; they wish but to remain at peace, under the established government; but there is no theologian who does not desire to be master of the state. Is it possible that men whose only science consists in the gift of speaking without understanding themselves, or being understood by others, should have ruled, and still should continue to rule, almost universally?

The countries of the north have this advantage over the south of Europe, that these tyrants of the mind have less influence there than elsewhere. For this reason, the princes of the north are generally less superstitious, and less malignant, than other princes. An Italian prince employs poison, and goes to confession. Protestant Germany is neither in possession of such fools, nor of such monsters; and I should have no difficulty to prove, in general, that the
least

least superstitious kings have always been the best,

You perceive, worthy inheritor of the spirit of Marcus Aurelius, the freedom with which I address you. You are almost the only prince on earth who merits thus to be addressed.

L E T T E R XX.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Remusberg, May 9th, 1737.

I HAVE just received your letter, dated April the 17th, which has travelled with tolerable speed. I know not how it happens that mine are so long on the road.

How suspicious does your indulgence for my verses appear! Be ingenuous, sir; own you dread the fate of Philoxenus, and suppose me another Dionysius, otherwise your language would be very different. A sincere friend speaks disagreeable but salutary truths. You would have criticised the monument, and the funeral obsequies which precede the battles in the fourth stanza of the ode; you would have condemned the metaphor of chagrin disarmed,

H 4

which

which is too bold, &c. In a word, you would have laid lop off these useless and scattered branches. To what purpose tell the half blind that his sight is good? Will he see the better? I intreat you, sir, to become my rigid cenfor, as you already have been my poetical example and tutor. Do not stop at the finger-nails of a figure by a very ignorant sculptor, but correct the whole work.

I send you the continuation of the translation of Wolf, as far as the paragraph 770. You will receive the conclusion from my dear Cesario, my little ambassador to the province of reason, the terrestrial paradise.

I do not place my sovereign good in the splendour of magnificence, but in unpolluted pleasures, and the intercourse of the most reasonable of beings among men. In a word, could I dispose of myself, I should come in person to Cirey, there to reason my fill. I place you at the head of all thinking beings: the Creator would certainly find it difficult to produce a mind more sublime than yours.

Bless'd genius, whom unnumber'd gifts adorn,
To prove th' extent of nature's powers born!
Prolific of the vulgar and the great,
Form'd to exist in tumult or in state,

CORRESPONDENCE, 106

Of favours frugal, Heaven but seldom grants
That wisdom which mankind each moment
wants;

Its native sons but rarely stand reveal'd :

Alas ! how few Voltaires ten ages yield !

My portrait will be finished to-day ; the painter is exerting all his powers that he may be successful. I am already indebted to you for some graceful touches, but my conscience would accuse me were I not to give you this information.

How can I finish my letter without a word to Emily ? I intreat you to assure her of my perfect esteem. It is your duty to procure her portrait for me ; I dare not make the request myself.

Could my body travel as fast as my thoughts, I would personally tell you how great is the esteem and respect with which

I am, &c,

LET

L E T T E R XXI,

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Amate, May 14th, 1737 *.

I HOPE you will excuse the injustice I did your sincerity in my last letter. I am charmed to find myself deceived, and to see that you know me well enough to be desirous of correcting my faults. I pass condemnation on my ode. I own all the errors with which you tax me; but, far from being repulsed, I shall again importune you with more of my writings, which I shall intreat you to correct with the same severity. If I gain no other advantage, I shall always have that of extorting some good verses from you.

The Graces ever waiting at your beck,
Bestow the charms my languid verses want,
And carefully supply my lack of skill;
Their flow'rets scatt'ring o'er my barren ode.
Thus, by the magic pow'r which they impart,
Whate'er you deign to touch is turn'd to gold.

* Dated Ruppin, May 20th, 1737, in the edition of Berlin. T.

Let us at present speak of philosophy. In all things you take the road of genius, which, far from feeling itself animated by mean and contemptible jealousy, esteems merit wherever it is met with, and acknowledges it without prejudice. I thank you, in behalf of M. Wolf, for the advantageous manner in which you explain yourself on what relates to him. I perceive, sir, you have very well understood the difficulties which surround the *simple being*. Permit me to reply.

Mathematicians prove that a line may be divided *ad infinitum*, and that any body which has two sides, or two faces (which amounts to the same) may in like manner be so divided. But, if I do not mistake, there is no relation either to line or points in the proposition of M. Wolf; it speaks of units, or the indivisible parts which compose matter. No person can, or ever will, perceive these units; we, therefore, can have no idea of them, for we have no clear ideas of things which are not palpable to the senses. M. Wolf says every thing which a simple being is not, and he sets aside length, breadth, and space with great precaution, that he may prevent mathematical reasoning, which is not applicable to his simple being, because it does not contain any of the properties of matter.

Our

Our philosopher employs the artifice of Saint Paul, who, after having carried us into the heaven of heavens, there leaves us to our own imaginations, supplying by the term *unspeakable* what could not have been explained without danger of being himself entrapped.

Still it seems to me that nothing can be more true than the propositions that every complex being must consist of parts; that these parts may be as numerous as you please, but that we must finally come to units; and that, for want of organs, eyes and feelings sufficiently subtle, and of instruments sufficiently delicate, we never can decompose matter, so as to discover the units.

What do you figure to yourself when you recollect a regiment composed of fifteen hundred men? You imagine fifteen hundred men as so many units, combined under one chief. Take an individual from among these men; I find him to be a finite being, that has extent, size, and figure. I find him to be divisible: experience proves him so to be; but I cannot say that he is divisible *in infinitum*. Is it possible that he should, at the same time, be a finite and an infinite being? No, for that implies contradiction; and, as nothing can be and not be at the same time, man necessarily cannot be infinite; he therefore is not divisible *in infinitum*. Hence there must

be units of which, taken collectively, numbers are composed, and it is these numbers, when so composed, that are called matter.

I willingly resign the divine Plato, the divine Aristotle, and all the heroes of scholastic philosophy. They were men who had recourse to words to conceal their ignorance. Their disciples have believed in them because of their reputation; and whole ages have been satisfied to speak of without understanding them. We are no longer permitted to use words but in their proper meaning. M. Wolf gives the definition of each word, regulates the use to which it is to be applied, and, having defined his terms, he prevents numerous disputes which often arise from a play of words, or from the different ideas annexed to them by the persons who employ them.

Nothing can be more true than what you say of metaphysics; yet, I confess my curiosity and desire of novelty are so great, that I cannot forbear to study subjects which highly interest me, and which attract my attention by their very difficulties.

You tell me, in the politest manner possible, that I am a stupid animal*. This indeed I

* *Une bête*. This is a pun, and signifies either fool or beast, in French; like the word ass, in English. T.

previously

previously suspected ; I now begin to be convinced it is truth. To speak seriously, you are in the right. What is the vaunted reason of man, by which he so proudly profits ? What is the possessor of this reason ? Men, that they might live in society, have been obliged to choose superiors to themselves, and to make laws to inform each other that robbery and murder are acts of injustice. These reasonable men go to war in the support of vain arguments, which they do not comprehend. These reasonable men have a hundred different religions, each more absurd than the other. These reasonable men love to live, yet complain of languor, and the duration of time, while they do live. Is there any reason in all this ?

The discoveries of mathematicians may be objected, and the calculations of Messrs. Bernoulli and of Newton. But were these people more reasonable than others ? They passed their whole lives in search of algebraic proportions, and the relations of numbers, and drew no profit from the short duration of their existence.

How much do I approve the philosopher who wisely unbends in the arms of Emily ! I am well persuaded I should infinitely prefer her acquaintance to that of the centre of gravity, the
squaring.

squaring of the circle, the aurum potable, and the sin against the Holy Ghost,

You speak, sir, like an intelligent man, on what regards the princes of the north, who indubitably have great obligations to Luther and Calvin (poor creatures in other respects) who have freed them from the yoke of priests, and have very considerably increased their revenues, by the secularization of ecclesiastical states. Their religion however is not purified from superstition and bigotry. We have a sect of *The Beatified*, who do not ill resemble the presbyterians of England, and who are so much the more insupportable because they are bitter and inflexibly stiff toward all who are not of their opinion. We are obliged to conceal our sentiments that we may not unseasonably raise up enemies. Such a man has neither faith nor truth * is a common proverb, and in the mouth of every body, and is of itself worth the decision of a council. You are condemned without being heard, and persecuted without being known; beside, to attack the received religion of a country, is to attack the self-love of man in its last retreat, which makes him prefer his own faith,

* *Cet homme n'a ni foi ni loi.*

without

without knowing why, to any foreign creed; and to every objection that can be alleged.

On the subject of Bayle; I, sir, think like you; Jurieu, who persecuted him, forgot the first duty of religion, which is charity. Bayle beside appears to me the more estimable because he was of the sect of the academics, who did nothing more than simply relate both sides of the question, without rashly deciding on subjects the properties of which cannot be discovered by man, except that they are unfathomable.

I think I see you at table, with your glass in your hand, remembering your friend. It is more flattering to me that you should drink my health than to see temples, such as were erected for Augustus, rise up to my memory. Brutus was satisfied with the approbation of Cato, and I with the suffrages of a sage. How powerfully do you aid my own self love! To this I incessantly oppose the friendship you have for me. But how difficult is it to do ourselves justice; and how carefully ought we to guard against that vanity to which we find ourselves so naturally inclined!

My little ambassador will soon depart, provided with a letter of credit, and a portrait you are so determined to possess. His journey has been delayed by military occupations. He is

like the Messiah who is announced; I continually speak of him, but he never comes. I beg you will commit every thing to his care which you wish to confide to my discretion.

I am,

With the most perfect esteem, &c.

L E T T E R XXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

May, 1737.

I RECEIVED the letter of the philosophic prince, dated May the 14th, and am informed there is a large parcel for me, at the house of the fleur du Breuil Tronchin of Amsterdam. This parcel probably contains the second part of the metaphysics. Inimitable prince, every thing is within your sphere. I am to your royal highness as a circle infinitely small, included within a circle infinitely great; all the lines of the circle infinitely great terminate at the centre of the infinitely small circle, but how vast the difference between their circumference! I delight in every thing in which your genius delights; but I scarcely can approach that which you perfectly

attain. I perceive not only the protector of M. Wolf, but a mind equal to his own. I will venture to address myself to this mind.

You are pleased to tell me that a being like man cannot be finite and infinite at the same time, for that would imply a contradiction. True, he cannot be finite and infinite at the same time; but physically he may be a finite being, and geometrically infinitely divisible. This infinite divisibility is nothing more than the impossibility of assigning the last indivisible point, and this impotence is what men call infinitely small; as is that which, from a similar kind of impotence, they call infinitely great, when speaking of the extent of space.

Let us, for example, take a unit. 1 is finite; but take $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$, $\frac{1}{16}$, &c. and you will never exhaust this series. It is nevertheless true, that such a series of one-half, one-fourth, one-eighth, one-sixteenth, taken collectively, would be equal to the unit. This I imagine to be the whole secret of the infinitely small.

Assume, in the same manner, the infinitely great, and it is certain that the numbers 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, &c. will never approach infinity; but take these numbers collectively and
distinctively,

distinctively, and their sum total is equal to infinitude.

This is the method of mathematicians. They have demonstration with them, from which there is no appeal.

Thus, therefore, there is no contradiction between these two propositions; the unit 1 is finite, and the series $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$, equal to that unit is infinite.

These truths, these mathematical demonstrations, do not in any manner prevent such things as undivided beings in nature, beings which are units, atoms, and without which the world could not be organized. It is very true that matter is composed of the undivided, because unalterable beings are necessary for the formation of germs, which are ever the same; for the elements of mixed beings would not be elements, if they were combined. Thus, it is exceedingly true, that the principles of things are substances, hard, solid, and undivided; but are these principles, therefore, indivisible? I by no means perceive such a consequence.

If they were again divided, the universe would not be what it is; but it is very evident they are divisible, because they are material; they have sides.

While the elements of fire, water, and air,

shall be what they are, undivided, they will ever be the same. Nature changes not, but the author of nature may divide them.

We have now to comprehend how, according to M. Wolf, matter can be composed of simple beings without extent. This is an idea which the poverty of my mind never can acquire. I am in expectation of the second part of the metaphysics which your royal highness has deigned to present to me, and I hope this second part will give me wings, that I may mount toward the simple being. My wretched heaviness continually sinks me toward the being of extent.

When shall I obtain wings to fly and pay my respects to a being the least simple, the most universal which exists on earth; to your royal highness?

The marchioness du Chatelet impatiently expects the amiable man whom Frederic calls his friend, the Hephæstion of another Alexander.

At length, sir, I am about to put your goodness to the proof, and to take the liberty of giving employment to your beneficent character. I earnestly request a favour from the philosophic prince.

I know not how it happened, but, some years since, I found myself prompted to write a kind
of

of history of the man who was half Alexander, half Don Quixote, the so famous Charles XII. of Sweden. M. Fabrice, who had been seven years in his service, the envoy of France, the envoy of England, and a colonel in his army, furnished me with memoirs. These gentlemen might very well be mistaken, and I felt how difficult it was to write the history of a contemporary. The very persons who were spectators of the same events all saw them in a different point of view. Witnesses contradict each other; it is necessary that they should all be dead before the history of a king should be written; like as, at Rome, before any saint is inserted in the calendar, his mistresses, his creditors, his footmen, and his pages are all entombed.

I may add, I reproach myself with having scribbled two volumes on one man, when I remember that man was not you.

I particularly blush for having spoken of so many battles, which so many evils brought on mankind; and my repentance has been increased when I have been told, by some officers, that, in speaking of these battles, I have not spoken truth; or, in other words, I have not spoken of their regiments. They imagined I ought to have written *their* history.

I should have done better to have avoided

the details of battles fought with the Sarmatians, and to have made a more accurate enquiry of all the good which the Czar had done, in behalf of humanity. I esteem a square league of waste land, clear and cultivated, much above a whole plain, heaped with the dead.

A new edition of my trifles in prose and verse has been begun, and it seems to me these trifles might become more useful, were I to give an abridgment of the great things which Charles XII. and the useful ones which the Czar Peter performed.

I have no memoirs of Muscovy in my retreat at Cirey. Philosophy, the belles lettres, peace, and felicity inhabit there; but we receive no news whatever from Russia.

I cast myself at the feet of your royal highness, and intreat you would kindly engage some well informed servant whom you may have in Muscovy, to answer the questions here annexed. I shall have the obligation to your royal highness of having been made better acquainted with the truth, which is a very uncommon traffic between princes and private persons. But you do not resemble other princes in any respect. From others men ask wealth and honours; you are the only one from whom they ask information.

Solomon

Solomon of the north, the queen of Sheba,
that is to say of Cirey, joins me in every senti-
ment of admiration.

L E T T E R XXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Cirey, May 25th, 1737.

SOME man renown'd, some hero, or
some sage,
Might well have founded those abodes you blest;
But 'twas an honour not to Remus due,
Much rather to some kindred spirit worthy
Rome.
Braving his proud republic, Scipio came,
(The first who Carthage conquer'd) Rome ab-
juring,
The conscript thunder, and th' ungrateful herd,
And hither brought that valour which had been
Of Rome the stay, the terror, and the pride.
In exile Tully hither fled, and eloquence,
August in Roman garb, with ev'ry art
That can the mind adorn and captivate,
His steps attended. Ovid wander'd here,
And taught a science more enchanting still;

Taught how to love and how to make love
known.

These were the founders of your noble domes ;
From these descended, and by these inspir'd,
The Smiles, and Loves, and Pleasures wait
your will,

Obedient erst to them. Where you are there
is Rome.

Fall'n is the first ; 'tis only holy now.
Nor will I thither stray to pay my vows ;
To Remusberg my pilgrimage shall be.

This, sir, is what I think of Mount Remus ;
I am in all things destined to differ much in
opinions from monks. Your two capuchin an-
tiquaries, who, according to their own account,
had been sent by the pope to examine whether
the brother of Romulus had built your palace,
ought certainly to have made a saint of this Re-
mus, being unable to make him the founder
of the royal abode. Remus apparently would
have been as much astonished to see himself in
Paradise as in Prussia.

We impatiently wait, in the little paradise of
Cirey, the arrival of two things very uncommon
in France, the portrait of a prince like you, sir,
and of M. von Kayserling, whom your royal
highness

highness honours with the name of your intimate friend.

Louis XIV. one day, said to a man who had rendered great services to Charles II. of Spain, and who had lived familiarly with him—The king of Spain, then, loved you much?—Ah! fire, replied the poor courtier, who is it that you kings love?

And are you, sir, determined to possess all the virtues which it is so vainly wished kings should possess, and for which they are so continually receiving false praise? Is it not enough to be superior to other men in understanding, and in rank, but will you exceed them in sensibility?—A prince and a friend!—Here are two words united which hitherto had been supposed incompatible.

I, however, have continually ventured to believe that none but princes could feel pure friendship; for private persons, in general, who pretend to be friends, are rivals; there is continually some cause of contest between them; fame, places, women, and especially the favours of you lords of the earth, for which they dispute more than for women themselves, who, however, are at least your equals in worth.

But it seems to me that a prince, and especially a prince like you, having nothing to contend for,

for, and being without fear of rivalry, may without embarrassment, and wholly at his ease, feel affection for his friend. Happy the man who is allowed to participate the bounties of a heart like yours ! M. von Kayserling can have nothing to wish : what astonishes me is to think that he should travel.

Cirey, also, sir, has a small temple dedicated to friendship. Madame du Chatelet, who I can assure you possesses all the virtues of a great man with all the graces of her sex, is not unworthy of his visit, and she will receive him as the friend of prince Frederic.

Be persuaded, sir, that there will never be any other portrait at Cirey than yours. We have here a small statue of Cupid, under which we have placed *noto Deo* ; and below your portrait we shall put *solì principi*.

I am exceedingly angry with myself that, in my letters to your royal highness, I never send you any news of the French literature, concerning which you condescend to interest yourself ; but I live in profound retirement, with one of the most amiable ladies of the present, and with books of the past age. It seldom happens that novelties which deserve to be sent to Mount Remus arrive at this retreat.

I know not whether it be from a want of encouragement,

ragement, whether the French, after having discovered the good in the age of Louis XIV. have the misfortune at present to seek what is better than good, or whether in all countries Nature slumbers and seeks repose after great efforts, like the earth after an abundant harvest; but the belles lettres are greatly on the decline among us.

The most useful part of philosophy to men, that which regards the soul, will never be of any worth among us, so long as we are not allowed to think freely. There is a certain number of superstitious people here, who do great injury to all truths. Were Cicero alive, and were he writing his tract *de Natura Deorum*, or his Tusculan Disputations, or were Virgil to say,

*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
Subiecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!*

Cicero and Virgil would run great risks. The Jesuits only are allowed to say what they please; and, if your royal highness has read what they have said, I doubt whether you will do them so much honour as to M. Rollin. The historian to write well should live in a free country, but most of the French refugees, in
Holland

Holland and in England, have forgotten the purity of their mother tongue.

With respect to our universities, they have little merit except that of their antiquity. The French possess no Wolf, no Maclaurin, no Manfredy, no s'Gravesande, no Muschenbroek. Our professors in philosophy, in general, are not worthy to study under the persons above cited. The academy of sciences very well sustains the honour of the nation ; but the light it emits is not sufficiently expansive. Each academician confines himself to particular views. We neither possess any good physics nor astronomical principles for the instruction of youth, but are obliged for these to have recourse to foreigners.

The opera is supported because music is the fashion ; but unfortunately that music cannot, like the Italian, be the delight of all nations. Comedy is absolutely on the decline. A propos of comedy, I am exceedingly mortified that some person has sent your royal highness the *Prodigal Son*. In the first place the copy you have is not my real work, and in the second, the true copy is but a sketch which I have neither time nor inclination to finish.

I speak to your royal highness with that open simplicity which perhaps is too much my character ; I tell you what I think of my nation,
without

without wishing to praise or to condemn ; and I believe that the French live rather upon credit in Europe, like a wealthy man who insensibly is wasting his patrimony. Our nation requires to be encouraged by the eye of the master : for my own part, sir, I require nothing more than a continuation of the kindness of prince Frederic. I want nothing but health ; did I possess that, I would labour hard to preserve this kindness ; but he who has but little health and little genius is a poor man.

I am,

With profound respect, &c.

L E T T E R XXIV.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Naven, May 25th, 1737.

I HAVE provided Cefario with every thing requisite for his expedition to Cirey. He will give you the portrait you were so determined to possess. Nothing but the unfortunate materiality

materiality of my body could prevent me from accompanying him *.

Cefario had the misfortune to be born in Courland. The baron von Kayserling, his father, is court-marshal to the duke of Courland, but he is the Plutarch of this modern Bœotia. I recommend him to you with all possible earnestness. Confide in him entirely, he has the uncommon advantage of being both a prudent and a witty man. On seeing him depart I shall exclaim,

Too highly favour'd ship that Virgil bear'ft
To blest Athenian shores, &c. †

Could I feel envy it would be at the journey which Cefario is preparing to take. The only thing that consoles me is the idea of seeing him return, like the chief of the Argonauts, who brought back the treasures of Colchos. What will be my joy when he shall give me the Maid of Orleans, the reign of Louis XIV. the New-

* The original reads, Nothing but the unfortunate materiality of my body could prevent my *mind* from accompanying him. T.

† Navis, quæ tibi creditum

Debes Virgilium ; sinibus Atticis, &c.

Hor. lib. i. od. 3.

tonian philosophy, and the other unknown wonders which you have not yet thought proper to make public ! Do not deprive me of this consolation. Will not you, who so ardently desire the happiness of mankind, contribute to make me happy ? An agreeable book, in my opinion, constitutes a great part of true happiness.

It is but just that you should assure the Venus-Newton of my attentions toward her. Science never could find a better abode than in the person of a lovely woman. What philosopher could resist her arguments ? While conducted by philosophy so amiable, reason would ever be our guide. For my own part, I greatly fear the gilded arrows of the little Cytherean god.

Cesario will inform you of the perfect esteem I have for you ; he will tell you how highly we honour your virtue, merit, and talents. I entreat you will confide in whatever he shall say to you from me, and be assured it is impossible to speak too highly of the consideration with which I am, &c.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXV.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Ruppin, July 6, 1757.

WERE I a poet I should have replied in verse to the charming stanzas your last letter contained, but reviews, journies, cholic and fever, have so far interrupted my rhyming vein that Phœbus remains inexorable to the prayers I offer; he refuses to inspire me with his fire divine.

“ To Remusberg alone I wish to go.”

The pleasure this line gave me was great indeed! I read it over and over above a thousand times. A genius of your rank, a man free from prejudice, and whose lively imagination is subordinate to his reason, would indeed be a very uncommon apparition in this country. What happiness could equal mine, could I improve my mind by communicating with yours, and feel myself guided, under your care, on my road to the beautiful!

I give you the history of Remus for no more than it is worth. The origin of nations is
generally

generally fabulous, and proves nothing more than the antiquity of colonies. Let us rank the anecdote of Remus with the history of the holy phial, and the magic of Merlin.

Capuchin antiquaries shall never be either my historiographers or the directors of my conscience. How different is your manner of thinking from that of these supporters of error! You love truth, they superstition; you practise the christian virtues, they remain satisfied with teaching them; they detract, and you pardon. Were I a catholic I would neither choose Saint Francis of Assise nor Saint Bruno for my patron; I would proceed immediately to Cirey, where I should meet with virtues and talents superior in every respect to those of the hair-cloth and the frock.

The kings, without friendship and gratitude, of whom you speak, seem to me to resemble the log which Jupiter sent down to be the king of the frogs. I am unacquainted with ingratitude, except from the evil which it has done me. I can even affirm, without affecting sentiments which are not natural to my heart, I would renounce every kind of grandeur, did I think it incompatible with friendship. You have a large share in mine. Your candour, and the sincere and noble confidence which you testify for me,

on all occasions, well merit I should bestow on you the title of friend. I wish you were appointed professor to princes, that you might teach them to be men; might teach them to feel, and make them understand the true value of grandeur, and how much it is their duty to contribute to the happiness of mankind.

My poor Cefario has been stopped short by the gout; he has rid himself of it as well as he was able, and is now on his road for Cirey. You will judge whether he does not merit all the friendship I feel for him. When taking leave of my little friend, I said to him, recollect that you are going to an earthly paradise, to an abode a thousand times more charming than the island of Calypso, that the goddesses of these haunts will not cede in beauty to the enchantress of Telemachus, that you will find in her those ornaments of the understanding which are so preferable to the graces of the body, and that this miracle employs her leisure in the search after truth. You will there see the human mind in its last stage of perfection; wisdom without austerity, surrounded by the tender Loves and the Smiles.

Here you will contemplate the sublime Voltaire, will admire the amiable author of the Mundane; the man who is able to raise

himself to the level of Newton, and who, without sinking, can sing of Phillis, metamorphosed into a marchioness. What art shall we use to induce thee, my dear Cefario, to forsake a dwelling so delightful! How feeble will the ties of former friendship be, when struggling against so many attractions!

I put my interest into your hands, sir; it is for you to restore me my friend; perhaps he is the only mortal worthy of becoming a citizen of Cirey; but recollect he is my all, and that it would be a crying injustice to snatch him from me.

I hope my little ambassador will return loaded with your golden fleece; that is to say your Maid of Orleans, and so many other half promised, and still more impatiently expected pieces. You know the pleasure I take in your works is unalterable, therefore should you refuse me this pleasure, the cruelty would be the greater.

It does not seem to me that a depravity of taste is so general in France as you suppose. The French still have their Apollo at Cirey, can boast of their Fontenelle, their Crebillon, and their Rollin, for perspicuity and beauty in the historical style; of their Olivet for translation, and of Bernard and Gresset, whose easy and polished verses may very well replace those

of Chaulieu and La Fare. Though Greffet may sometimes sin against accuracy, the fire by which he is hurried away well may plead his excuse; full of his thoughts, he neglects his words. How few of nature's works are complete, and how seldom do we meet with Voltaires! I had almost forgotten M. de Reaumur, who, as an experimental philosopher, has acquired great reputation here.

These appear to me to be the quintessence of your great men; the remainder do not seem very worthy of attention. The belles lettres are no longer rewarded, now, as they were in the time of Louis the Great. This monarch, though ill informed, made it an affair of moment to protect those from whom he expected immortality. He loved fame; and to that noble passion France is indebted for her academy, and the arts by which she is still adorned.

With respect to metaphysics, I do not believe they can make their fortune any where but in England. You have your bigots, and we have ours. Germany is not deficient either in superstitious or fanatic persons, enamoured of their prejudices, who are malignant to excess, and who are the more incorrigible because their ignorance is so stupid that it interdicts the use of reason. It is very certain we have good cause

to be prudent in the company of such people. A man who has the character of being destitute of religion, though he were the most worthy man on earth, is generally decried. Religion is the idol of the people, and whoever dares to touch it with hand profane, draws down their hatred, and is held in abomination by them.

I am infinitely delighted with Cicero; I discover many sentiments in his Tusculan Disputations conformable to my own. I would not however advise him to affirm, were he now alive—"To die may be an evil, but to be dead is nothing."—In a word, Socrates preferred hemlock to the constraint of keeping silence; but I know not whether there be any pleasure in becoming the martyr of the error of another. The most certain of the things we possess in this world is life, and this it seems to me every reasonable man ought to endeavour to preserve.

I can assure you, I despise the Jesuits too much to read their works; the evil propensities of the heart in them every where eclipse the qualities of the mind. Our life is beside so short, and our memories are in general so defective, that we ought only to seek instruction where the purest knowledge is to be found.

I send you on the present occasion the history of the Virgin of Czenstochow, by M. de Beaufobre. I hope you will be pleased with the turn and the style of that piece. As far as I am a judge, I have not remarked any crimes committed against the purity of language. This it is true is a thing much neglected by most of the refugees, though I believe there are some among them, to be found, who would not be reprehended by the academy.

Your universities, and our academy of sciences, are at present in a mournful state. It should seem the Muses wish to desert these climes. Frederic I. king of Prussia, who was a prince of very confined genius, but well disposed and docile, caused the arts to flourish under his reign. He delighted much in grandeur and magnificence, and was liberal even to profusion. Feeling emulation at all the praises which he heard bestowed on Louis XIV. he imagined that by choosing this monarch for his model, he could not fail in like manner to be praised. The court of Berlin was soon seen to ape that of Versailles; the imitation extended to every thing; ceremonies, harangues, the stately step, the measured phrase, tall musketeers, light horse, &c. Permit me
to

to spare you the trouble of reading a long description.

Queen Charlotte, the consort of Frederic, was a princess who, added to all the gifts of nature, had received an excellent education. She was daughter to the duke of Lunenburg, afterward elector of Hanover. This princess had been intimately acquainted with Leibnitz, at the court of her father, who had taught her the principles of philosophy, and particularly of metaphysics. The queen highly respected Leibnitz; she kept up a correspondence with him, and this occasioned him to make frequent journeys to Berlin. The philosopher naturally was a lover of all the sciences, and was acquainted with them all. M. de Fontenelle, speaking of him, very wittily says that, by decomposing him, materials enough might have been found to have formed several men of learning. The attachment Leibnitz had for the sciences never suffered him to lose sight of an endeavour to procure their establishment. He conceived the design of instituting an academy at Berlin, on the model of that at Paris, introducing however some trifling changes. He communicated his purpose to the queen, who was charmed with it, and promised to aid him with all her influence. Care was taken to in-

introduce the name of Louis XIV. The astronomers affirmed they should discover an infinity of stars, of which the king was to be the god-father; the botanists and physicians dedicated their talents to him. How was it possible to resist such various persuasion! The effects accordingly became evident; an observatory was presently constructed, an anatomical theatre was opened, and the academy, being formed, found Leibnitz its protector.

During the life of the queen, the academy was pretty well supported; but not so after her death. The king her consort did not long survive. New lords new laws: the arts at present daily wither, and I behold knowledge flying from us with tears in my eyes, and arrogant ignorance and barbarous manners usurp their place.

The drooping laurel, in our barren fields,
Now withers in neglect; say why, ye gods,
Must this my native land remain depriv'd
Of science, arts, and heaven-descended fame?

The judgment I have pass'd on *the Prodigal Son** I believe to be just; I find verses in it which are immediately known for yours; but

* *L'Enfant Prodigue.*

there

there are others which appear to me rather to be produced by a scholar than a master.

We are indebted to the French for the revival of science. After cruel wars, the propagation of christianity, and the frequent invasions of barbarians had given a mortal blow to the arts which had fled from Greece into Italy, some ages of ignorance passed on, at the end of which the torch again began to burn in France. The French removed the briars and thorns which had almost forbidden men the pursuit of fame, by the study of the belles lettres. Surely it is but just that other nations should preserve the remembrance of the obligation they owe the French, for the service which has been thus generally rendered. Ought not our gratitude toward those who give us life, and those who furnish food for the mind, to be equally strong ?

The defect of the Germans is not a want of understanding. They considerably approach the English in character ; they are laborious and profound. Having once seized on a subject, they dwell upon it, and the prolixity of their writings is eternal : could they be corrected of their heaviness, and a little familiarized to the graces, I should not think it impossible for my nation to produce great men.

There is one difficulty, however, which will
continually

continually prevent us from having good books in our language; and this consists in our not having any fixed use of words. Germany is divided among so many princes that no means ever can be found to induce them to submit to the decisions of an academy. Our men of learning, therefore, have no other resource than that of writing in foreign languages; and as it is exceedingly difficult perfectly to possess these, it is much to be feared our literature will never make any great progress.

There is another difficulty not less than the former. Princes generally despise the learned. The little care which the latter take of their dress, the dust of the study with which they come loaded, and the small relation that can exist between a head stored with good authors and the empty brains of courtiers, occasion princes to mock at the exterior of the learned, while the great man escapes their glance. The judgment of the prince is too much respected by his grantees for them to think proper to be of a different opinion, and they in like manner affect to condemn persons a thousandth part of whose worth they do not possess. *O tempora! O mores!*

For my own part, feeling that I am not formed for the age in which I live, I content myself

myself with not imitating the example of my equals : I incessantly preach to them that pride is the pinnacle of ignorance, and, acknowledging the superiority of you great men, I hold you worthy of my praise, and you in particular, sir, of my esteem ; this is entirely your own.* Regard me as a disinterested friend, for whose acquaintance you are solely indebted to your own merit.

I ever remain,

S I R,

Your very affectionate friend.

Written with one foot in the stirrup, and on the point of departing. I shall be back in a fortnight.

L E T T E R XXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R, .

July, 1737.

I AM furrounded by the benefits you have conferred on me. The baron von Kayserling, the portrait of your royal highness, the second part of the metaphysics of M. Wolf, the dissertation

tation of M. de Beaufobre, and especially the charming letter which you have deigned to write me from Rupin, dated July the 6th; these all are here; and with these I may brave the fever and the languor which prey upon me. I perceive it is possible to be in pain and yet to be happy.

Your amiable ambaffador is no longer troubled with the gout. We are soon to lose him; he came only to be regretted; he returns to the prince whom he loves, and by whom he is beloved, and leaves at Cirey an eternal remembrance of himself, and of the well-confirmed reign of Frederic. He brings my tribute with him: all I had to give I have given. It is said there are tyrants who strip their subjects, but good subjects voluntarily strip themselves for their sovereign's sake.

I have, therefore, loaded my packet with all I have written of the history of Louis XIV. with some detached pieces of poetry, which have been printed at the end of the *Henriade* in a very incorrect manner, and some scraps of philosophy. While packing up my thoughts I could not help thus exclaiming to myself—

Advent'rous wight, too vain and too secure,
Wilt thou the glance of genius dare endure?

Dull

Dull bird of night, to twilight gloom consign'd,
 What! Flutter in the rays that strike thee
 blind *!

Thy prince, added I, loves, understands and cultivates all the arts, from music to true philosophy. He is particularly acquainted with the great art of pleasing, and if to his other virtues he did not add that of indulgence, the baron von Kayserling would not be loaded with so enormous a packet.

In fine, sir, you have inspired me with that which princes so seldom inspire—with the utmost confidence.

I was desirous of adding the Maid of Orleans to the tribute I have paid, but your ambassador will inform you the thing was impossible. This little work has been for near a year in the possession of the marchioness du Chatelet, who will not part with it. The friendship with which she honours me will not permit her to venture any thing which might eternally separate us. She has renounced the whole world to live with

* To obviate the blame which might be incurred for the very bold liberty here taken, a *literal* translation of the verses is annexed. "Poor trifling genius, wilt thou dare to appear
 "before this immortal genius? To be worthy of thy master,
 "thou shouldst be universal; and this thou hast not the ho-
 "nour to be." T.

me,

me, in the bosom of solitude and studious contemplation. She knows that the least knowledge which should be obtained of the work would indubitably raise a storm. She fears every accident; she is not ignorant that the baron von Kayserling was kept tight of at Strasburg, and that he will be the same on his return; that he is watched, and that he may be searched; and she is well convinced you would not hazard the misery of your two subjects of Cirey for a few jokes in rhyme.

Your royal highness would perceive this trifling poem is written in a very different style from the history of Louis XIV. and the Newtonian philosophy, *sed dulce est desipere in loco*. Woe to the philosophers who never can un-wrinkle their brows. I regard austerity as a disease, and would a thousand times rather be languid, as I am, and subject to fever, than infected with gloom of mind. In my opinion; virtue, cheerfulness, and study, are three sisters, which ought never to be asunder. These three deities are your humble servants and my mistresses.

Metaphysics constitute a great part of the immensity of your knowledge. I, therefore, have not hesitated to submit my doubts to you, on this subject, and to request from your royal hands

hands a small ball of thread, as a clue to guide me through the labyrinth. You cannot imagine, sir, how much consolation it affords madame du Chatelet and myself to see you think thus like a philosopher, and endowed with the virtue that detests superstition. Ignorance, and the want of knowing that priests were their greatest enemies, have been the cause that most kings have encouraged fanaticism in their states.

Does history, in fact, afford a single example of priests who have promoted concord between monarchs and their subjects? Do we not, on the contrary, every where perceive that priests have set up the standard of discord and revolt? Did not the presbyterians of Scotland begin the civil wars which ended in the death of Charles I. a king who was a man of worth? Was it not a monk who assassinated Henry III. of France? Is not Europe still full of the traces of ecclesiastical ambition, and is not this sufficiently proved by bishops who are become princes, nay electors, and by a Romish priest treading on the necks of emperors?

For my own part, when I recollect the excess, the debility, and the phrenzy of mankind, I am continually astonished that during the ages of ignorance the popes did not attain universal monarchy.

I am

I am persuaded that, at present, the power of the sovereign would, of itself, be sufficient to stifle all the seeds of religious fury, and ecclesiastical discord, in a kingdom. Nothing more is necessary to effect this than to be a worthy man, and no bigot. Men, foolish as they are, have an internal conviction of the superiority of virtue to devotion. A devout king forms none but hypocrites; a virtuous one forms men like himself.

I have dared to think aloud in the presence of your royal highness, for your divine character encourages me to take every liberty. I have just ended a conversation with the baron von Kayserling, who has increased my admiration of and inflamed my zeal toward you. It is my misfortune to have a constitution which will probably prevent me from being a witness of the good you will do to men, and of the high examples you will afford them. Happy those who shall live in times so fortunate! Others shall more nearly inspect the fame and the felicity of your government. I, however, should have enjoyed the bounties of a philosophic prince, have tasted the first-fruits of his great mind, and have been but too happy, &c.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXVII.

From the Prince Royal.

TO wonders, wonders adding still, Voltaire,
 Thy vigils thou dost consecrate to man,
 Whose mind, not satisfied that thou canst charm,
 Thou wouldst exalt, enlighten, and enlarge.
 Great Newton's system having simplified,
 Its depth display'd before th' astonish'd view,
 Swift and prodigious in thy flight behold
 The standard of Melpomene's uprear'd !
 Thither th' enraptur'd passions breathless throng.
 Quitting the poniard, and anon the mask,
 With master stroke historic thou dost trace
 The Swedish hero, and the northern Czar ;
 Their vices, virtues, and illustrious acts ;
 Of this the rigid labours and the laws * ;
 Of that the fame, the frenzy, and the fall † ‡
 And by the parallel, to conquerors fearful,
 Dost indicate to kings the path of true renown.

For me, a native of the climes which dare,
 Despising prejudice, to do thee right,

* Peter I.

† Charles XII.

How much I marvel at thy various verse,
 Thy scientific lore, and all the gifts
 The bounteous gods upon thy head have shov'rd !
 Let Slander, serpent-tongu'd, her venom shed,
 To blast the laurel blooming on thy brow ;
 Or let the furious Bessus of Brussels *
 Eject his poison far as the farthest Loire,
 Be yet my simple voice (the voice of truth)
 Of future immortality the pledge.

Where, sir, do you find time for your labours ?
 Either your hours are equivalent to the days of
 others, or your fortunate and fertile genius sur-
 passes that of most great men. Scarcely have
 you ended interpreting the philosophy of New-
 ton, before you are industrious to enrich the
 French theatre with a new tragedy, and this
 play, which according to appearance is scarcely
 yet off the stocks, is already, as it were, follow-
 ed by a new work which you project.

You are willing to do the Czar the honour of
 writing his history like a philosopher. Not fa-
 tisfied with having surpassed all your predeces-
 sors by the elegance, the beauty, and the utility
 of your works, you are desirous likewise of ex-

* J. B. Rousseau, the calumniator of Saurin, and a traitor
 to his friends.

ceeding them in numbers. Eager to serve the human race, you consecrate your whole life to the public good. Providence has kept you in reserve, to teach men to prefer the lyre of Amphion, which built the walls of Thebes, to those warlike instruments which threw down the ramparts of Jericho. The testimony bestowed by some truths discovered, and some errors destroyed, is, in my mind, the finest trophy which posterity can erect to the glory of a great man. To what may you not pretend; you, who are as faithful in the worship of truth as you are zealous in the destruction of prejudice and superstition!

You expect, no doubt, to receive, by this conveyance, all the necessary materials to begin the work on which you intend to labour. What will be your surprise at receiving only metaphysics, and some verses? These, however, were all I was this time enabled to send you. A prolix treatise on metaphysics, and an indolent copyist, do not, when they meet, go far of a day.

I have read your forcible mathematical reasoning on the infinitely small with much attention; and I think we only differ in the manner of expressing ourselves. I ingenuously own to you I have no idea of infinitude; and I further

own that I am only acquainted with two species of numbers, equal or unequal numbers. Yet the infinite, being a number, is neither equal nor unequal. What is it then? If I have well understood you, it is your opinion, as it also is mine, that matter, relative to man, is infinitely divisible; because it is in vain that men would attempt to decompose matter; they never can arrive at the units of which it is formed; but that in reality, and with respect to the essence of things, matter must necessarily be composed of a mass of units, which are the sole principles of matter, and which the author of nature has thought proper to conceal. Therefore, whoever should speak of matter without the idea of these units, joined and arranged together, would use a word without a meaning. The modification of these units afterward determines the differences between beings.

Wolf is perhaps the only philosopher who has dared to give a definition of the simple being. We have no knowledge of things which do not fall under the observation of our senses, or which we cannot express by signs; nor can we obtain any intuitive knowledge of units, because we never shall acquire instruments sufficiently fine to be able to separate matter to such nice extents. The present difficulty is to know how

we

we may explain a thing which never has been subjected to our senses. It was absolutely necessary to give new definitions, different in all respects to any thing that relates to matter.

To come at this definition, Wolf has prepared us by that which he has given of space and extent. If I am not mistaken, he explains himself thus.

“ Space is the void which exists between the
 “ parts, insomuch that every being which has
 “ pores occupies space between them. Now,
 “ all composite beings must have pores, some
 “ more apparent than others, according to
 “ their different composition: therefore, all
 “ composite beings contain a space. But a unit,
 “ not having parts, and consequently not hav-
 “ ing any interstices, or pores, it will result that
 “ it cannot partake of space.”

Extent is called by Wolf the continuity of beings. A line, for example, can only be formed by an arrangement of units which touch each other, and which may be continued in a curve, or in a right line. Thus a line has extent; but one being, one, which is not continued, cannot occupy extent. I again repeat, extent, according to Wolf, is only the continuity of beings. A moment's reflection will lead you to hold these definitions to be so true that you will not

be able to refuse your assent. I only request a transitory glance, which is sufficient, sir, to elevate you, not only to the simple being, but, to the highest degree of knowledge which the human mind can attain.

I have just seen a person of Berlin with whom I have had a long conversation concerning you ; I mean our envoy Borck, who is returned from England. He has very much alarmed me concerning the state of your health. He is never weary of speaking of the pleasure he has taken in your conversation. The mind, he asserts, is triumphant over the infirmities of the body.

You shall be served like a philosopher, and by philosophers, in the commission of which you have judged me capable. I immediately wrote to my friend in Russia ; he will answer with truth and precision to those points on which you wish for intelligence. Not satisfied with this, I have lately unearthed a secretary of the court, who is but just returned from Muscovy, after a continued abode of eighteen years. He is a man of great good sense, a person of knowledge, is in the secrets of their government, and of undoubted veracity. I have enjoined him to give an answer to the same questions. I fear that, in quality of a German, he may abuse the privilege of prolixity, and that, instead

stead of a memorial, he will write a volume. As soon as I receive any thing that relates to the subject I will send it with all diligence.

As a reward for all my labours, I only require a copy of the new edition of your works. I am too much interested in your fame not to be informed among the first of your new successes.

According to the description you have given me of the prospect of Cirey, I imagine I only read the description and history of my own retreat. Remusberg is a little Cirey, except, fir, that we have neither a Voltaire nor a madame du Chatelet.

I here send you another little odé, insipid enough, and sufficiently ill written. It is an apology for the goodness of God; the fruit of my leisure, the inclination of sending you which I could not resist. Might I, if it be not to abuse those precious moments of which you make so marvellous a use, intreat you to correct it? I have had the misfortune to love poetry, and to write it as ill as one might wish; but the thing which ought to disgust me, and certainly would repulse any reasonable person, is the very spur by which I am impelled. I say to myself, little caitiff, though thou hast hitherto met with no success, yet take courage, have recourse to the polishing tool, and again apply thyself to

the work. I thus, by being myself inflexible, hope to obtain favour from Apollo.

In the flower of my youth, an amiable lady inspired me with two passions at once ; you will easily imagine the one was the passion of love, the other the passion of poetry. This little miracle of nature, with every possible grace, was possessed of taste and delicacy. These she wished to communicate to me. In love I was successful enough, and ill enough in poetry. From that time I have been tolerably often a lover, and always a poet.

Should you be acquainted with any secret to cure mankind of this mania, you will really do a christian-like act to communicate it to me ; if not, I condemn you to teach me the rules of that enchanting art which you have embellished, and which is, in return, so honourable to you.

We princes always have interested motives, nor do we ever form any acquaintance without having some private views, which directly regard our own profit.

Oh ! how happy is Cesario ! How delicious must the moments have been which he has passed at Cirey ! for where are the pleasures which are equal to those of the imagination ? I have made very strenuous efforts to accompany him,
though

though but in fancy ; but this fancy was neither sufficiently glowing, nor was my mind sufficiently at its ease to be successful. Do you, sir, remain satisfied with these efforts, while to me it shall suffice that I have conversed with you by the intervention of my friend.

I am enraptured with the kindness which madame du Chatelet has testified for Cefario ; it would increase my esteem for this lady were the thing possible. The wisdom of Solomon would have been well rewarded had the queen of Sheba resembled her of Cirey. For my own part, I have not the honour either to be a sage or a Solomon ; I think myself highly honoured in the friendship of a person so accomplished as the marchioness du Chatelet. I have reason to believe that a sight of her would inspire me with ideas somewhat different from those which the vulgar name sage. I flatter myself, as you have the happiness of a more intimate acquaintance with that goddess, you will have some indulgence for my foibles, if it be any foible too much to admire the perfections of nature.

From philosophical argument here do I find myself insensibly engaged in an abortive declaration of love ; and while, in my metaphysics, I confine myself to the style of Wolf, my morality somewhat resembles that which Rameau has

rendered more enthusiastic, by the sweetness of his harmony.

In what relates to friendship, I hope you will confide in my constancy. Difficult in determining to give my heart, having given it, I never repent of the act. I am, with all that esteem which you more than any person merit,

S I R,

Your very affectionate friend.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

S I R,

Remusberg, August 27th, 1737.

CESARIO has transported me in imagination to Cirey, of which he has given me a most charming description. I am particularly delighted with the assurance which he has given me that you exceedingly surpass the high idea I had formed of you.

It seems you are both confined by illness, so that poor Cesario is not permitted to enjoy any perfect pleasure in this life. Your fever affords me an opportunity of speaking to you on a subject concerning which I am greatly interested,

I mean

I mean your health. I most earnestly intreat you would not work too hard. The studies and labours of the mind are infinitely prejudicial to the health of the body. It is your duty to take care of yourself, a duty which my friendship for you imposes. I esteem it one of the most fortunate accidents of my life to have been born the contemporary of a man of such distinguished merit; but this good fortune will be imperfect, should you not continue to be mine, and should I not one day have the satisfaction to see you.

You send me your works which to me are invaluable, and make my gratitude unbounded. I intreat, sir, you would tell the divine Emily how very highly I esteem her. I know not how to testify the sense I have of the manner in which she has received my little plenipotentiary.

You are both worthy of my admiration, but at present you rob me of my heart.

Could I be envious, I certainly should be so of Cefario; I would willingly endure his gout might I but have seen and heard that which he has seen and heard. Antiquity, while it vaunts of its wonders of the world, represents them as at a great distance from each other; but at Cirey we find two wonders whose worth is highly superior to those masses of stone, which, in themselves,

selves, possess no virtue. The masculine and permanent understanding of a woman, and the glowing, the universal, yet continually regular genius of a poet, appear to me more miraculous.

Your gratitude is by no means indebted to me for doing you nothing more than justice; I wish, sir, to testify my esteem for you by more solid marks than by portraits. At present be satisfied with these types, and wait the accomplishment of the future. I ever remain,

S I R,

Your very affectionate friend.

L E T T E R XXIX.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Remusberg, September 27, 1737*.

WERE I writing to an ungrateful person, I should be obliged to make him comprehend by a tedious description what gratitude is; fortunately for me this is not my case. My letter is addressed to one who is an example of virtue, to one who will understand me exceedingly

* The Berlin edition dates September the 20th.

ingly well when I say nothing more than that I am very sensibly affected by the obligations which I am under to him.

Cefario, who is acquainted with my eagerness for every thing which comes from you, has sent me your two letters, reserving to himself the pleasure of remitting me the remainder of your immortal works. Were there any thing which could redouble my impatience to see him once more, it would undoubtedly be the precious treasure of which he is the keeper.

Your works shall be preserved as the works of Aristotle were by Alexander: they shall be continually present with me, and in them I expect to possess a whole library. They are the honey which you have collected from the sweetest flowers, and which has lost nothing by having been gathered by you.

While you exist, sir, I would send only to Cirey in quest of truths. I will neither trouble the ice hills of Nova Zembla, nor the sandy deserts of Ethiopia, to gain intelligence of the figure of the earth. These are discoveries which certainly merit praise; far from blaming them, I find them worthy of the labour of those by whom they have been undertaken; but your impartial and judicious manner of considering things appears to me infinitely more profitable.

I learn

I learn more from your doubts than from all which the divine Aristotle, the sage Plato, and the incomparable Descartes, have so inconsiderately affirmed.

To disencumber ourselves of prejudices, or to acquire new information, is equally progressive in philosophy: the one enlightens, the other informs. The highest pleasure any reasonable man can enjoy in this world is, in my opinion, the discovery of new truths. I expect to reap an abundant harvest in your metaphysics. Madame du Chatelet robs me of wealth already possessed, and wrests it from the hands of my friend. What a subject for an elegy! It will however proceed no further, *for be bad too good a heart*. Do not therefore expect to hear any reproach. I only intreat you would tell the divine Emily that my mind communicates its complaints to hers of the darkness which she prevents you from dissipating.

Lost in the gloom of obscure metaphysics, I waited for a few words, under your hand, to gain new light; but a bright star which is your guide, the charming and divine Emily, wishes to enjoy the whole fruit of your labours; yet let me intreat you to permit that philosophy by which I shall certainly profit to visit this peaceful retreat.

How

How much am I charmed to perceive the age of Orestes and Pylades again restored at Cirey ! You afford an example of virtue which, till this time, never, alas ! existed—except in fable. Fear not, sir, that I should trouble the philosophic sweets of your repose ; were it in my power to render those divine ties by which you are united more durable, I would willingly offer you my aid. Once in my life, I have myself experienced shipwreck ; Heaven defend me from conducting to the shipwreck of others !

I believe, however, I have found an expedient by means of which you may, without risk, and without disturbing the tranquillity of Emily, satisfy my curiosity. This, sir, will be to communicate some passages from your metaphysics, dispersed through your letters, every time you shall do me the pleasure to write to me. The confidence I have in you, added to the ardour of instructing myself, occasion me to be thus importunate. Heaven has beside endowed you with too many talents to conceal them. It is your duty to enlighten the human race ; you are not a miser of your knowledge, and I am your friend.

My Russian correspondent has yet sent me no intelligence concerning that which you wish to
 4 know ;

know; I hope however shortly to give you satisfaction.

The priests will certainly never choose you for their panegyrist; your reflections on ecclesiastical power are too just, and they are supported by the irrevocable testimony of history. Does not their ambition originate in their being forbidden to practise any other vice? Men have forged to themselves a strange phantom of austerity and virtue; they have required priests, who are partly impostors and partly bigots, to conform to this caprice; they are not openly allowed either to be lechers or drunkards; but they are not forbidden to be ambitious, and ambition of all the passions has the most fearful crimes and disorders in its train.

This brings to my mind the monkey of Cleopatra, which had been taught to dance exceedingly well; but, some one taking a fancy to throw down some nuts, the monkey, forgetting his dress, his dancing, and the part he was playing, immediately seized on his prey.

A priest acts virtue, as long as virtue and his interest agree; but nature, on the smallest occasion, bursts through the cloud, and the crimes and vices which the appearance of virtue concealed are then discovered. That an ecclesiastical

cal monarchy could be established on so precarious a foundation is truly astonishing.

The authority of the priests of paganism originated in their false oracles, their ridiculous sacrifices, and their impertinent mythology. How grave were the tales of Daphne changed into a laurel; the virgins pregnant by Jupiter, and who brought forth deities; the god who quitted Olympus, his thunder, and his bolts, to come and inhabit the earth in the form of a bull, that he might elope with Europa; the resurrection of Orpheus triumphant over hell; and, in fine, an infinite number of absurdities and puerile narratives, which, at the best, were only capable of amusing children.

Men, however, who delight in the marvellous, have at all times addicted themselves to such chimeras, and have venerated those by whom nonsense was defended. Might we not well dispute the reason of man, after having proved how little reasonable men are?

I am charmed with your philosophy. There can be no doubt, sir, but that every thing ought to conduce to the happiness of mankind. And in effect, where is the use of enquiring into the length of the life of a flea; or whether the rays of the sun penetrate the waters of the ocean deeply; or to dispute concerning the ex-

istence of the soul of an oyster? Cheerfulness renders us gods, austerity demons. Such austerity is a kind of avarice, which deprives men of that happiness which they might otherwise enjoy.

Poor Tantalus may swim, but must not drink!

Nature, no doubt, repenting of having made a being too happy in this world, has subjected you to so many misfortunes. I am greatly alarmed and disturbed by your fever. I fear to lose *Solum hominem*, my master, who guides and instructs me. -Yes, with reason, I fear to lose a man who singly is of more worth than his whole nation.

Nature, by continued labours, becomes a better artist. She has formed your brain from the model of all the great originals which she had produced in all ages. It is to be feared she will remain satisfied with this her master-piece. Be certain, sir, your life is as precious to me as my own.

Oh should that cruel moment e'er be seen
That cuts thee from my sight for ever; Gods!
For ever! No, I could not long survive:
An hour so dreadful should be distant far.
Earth wants thy aid, and Emily thy love;
May't thou be spar'd, and may my death suffice.

I am,

I am, with the sincerest friendship, and all that esteem which supreme merit and virtue extort even from the envious, and receive as willing homage from the worthy,

SIR,

Your very faithful and affectionate friend.

L E T T E R XXX.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

October, 1737.

IT is really afflicting that Cirey is so far distant from the throne of Remusberg. Your benefits and your commands are tedious in their travels. On the 10th of October, I received a letter dated the 16th of August, full of poetry, excellent morals, good metaphysics, superior sentiments, and a philanthropy which enchants me.

Wherefore, sir, are you a prince? Why can you not, at least for a year or two, descend to the ordinary rank of men? We should then have the happiness to see you, which, since you have deigned to write to me, is the only good on earth I want. You are like the God of

M 2

Abraham,

Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; you commune with the faithful by the ministry of angels. You sent us the angel Cefario, but he is too soon returned toward his native heaven. We have beheld you in your ambaffador, but to fee you face to face is a happinefs we are denied. This is for none but the elect of Remufberg.

Our little paradise at Cirey presents its very humble respects to your empyrean, and the goddess Emilia bows before *Gott-Frederic*. Well, after a thousand delays I have received this excellent letter, the ode, and the third part of the metaphysics of Wolf. Here once again are benefits which other kings, those poor mortals who are nothing more than kings, are incapable of bestowing.

I must remark, concerning these metaphysics, that they are a little too prolix, too full of commonplace observations, but in other respects admirable, well connected, and often very profound. I cannot however but say, sir, I am wholly in the dark respecting this *simple being* of Wolf. I perceive myself whirled into a country in which I cannot breathe, on ground where I have not the power of moving, and among people whose language I do not understand. Could I flatter myself that I did understand this language, I, perhaps, should be bold enough to contend

with M. Wolf; though, be it understood, with great respect. For example, I should at once deny his definition of extent, which according to this philosopher is the continuity of beings. Pure space is extent, and has no need of other beings. If M. Wolf denies pure space, we are in this case of different religions; he must continue to be of his own, and I of mine. I am tolerant, and hold it to be exceedingly right that each person should think as he pleases, though he should think contrary to me; for whether there be a plenum or a vacuum is of little importance, and I certainly have a plenitude of esteem for M. Wolf.

I never can sufficiently pay the thanks I owe your royal highness; you again have deigned to promise me an account of what the Czar has done for the good of mankind. In this you are highly interested, for it is an example which you ought to surpass, and a theme on which I ought to write. You are born to command men more worthy of you than the subjects of the Czar. You possess every thing which this great man wanted; particularly you possess humanity, with which he had the misfortune not to be acquainted.

Adorable prince, the state of my health is continually languid; but if I wish to live it is that I may be a witness of what you shall act.

M 3

I earnestly

I earnestly desire to find Lucretius in an error, and my soul immortal, that I may hear your praises, either above, below, or I know not where, and should I then have ears they will certainly hear that you have realized the motto of our little exhibition of fireworks at Cirey, *Spes humani generis*.

To crown your benefactions, sir, you have sent me a new ode, written by yourself. Thus Cæsar, while young, employed his leisure. He, Augustus, and most of the good emperors, were poets; I might even cite bad princes, but I do not wish to dishonour poetry.

You have acted very rightly, great prince, to exercise your genius in an art which extends to all things; and, since you have done the French language the honour of studying it so well, you will find no mode more excellent of teaching you to speak it with energy, than that of putting your thoughts into verse; for the very essence of poetry is to say more, and say it better, than in prose. I have a second time taken the liberty very scrupulously to examine your work; I dare venture to tell you my opinion on the least things, and, however perfect a knowledge you may have obtained of the French language, there are certain turns which no genius can divine, as well as certain modes

modes of speaking, which custom has established among us. It is sometimes impossible to distinguish the word which belongs to prose from that which poetry may admit; and that which will be sufferable in one kind, from that which is insufferable in the other. These are errors I daily commit, when I write in Latin. True it is your royal highness is infinitely better acquainted with the French than I am with the Latin language; yet there is continually some small apostrophe, some accent, omitted; and with your good leave I will make such trifling corrections.

To my remarks on your ode, I here add some stanzas, in which, rigorously pursuing your ideas, I have clothed them in other language; and I have only been guilty of this temerity, that you may yourself deign to re-write my verses, should you condescend to apply your leisure moments to render your ode perfect.

I know you have the noble ambition of endeavouring to excel in whatever you undertake. You have been so successful in music that there would be some difficulty, at present, for you to find a musician who should surpass you. We have just been playing some of your music; your portrait hangs over the harpsichord. Thus, great prince, are you formed to enchant all

Oh! How happy must those be who approach your person, and how much reason has M. von Kayferling to love you! On his arrival, we all of us judged of the ambassador by the prince, and of the prince by the ambassador. Other princes have subjects only; you, sir, have only friends and in this you peculiarly excel.

Happiness I find is seldom pure and unmixed. Your royal highness sends me the letters of a great man, and the works of a sage; and you know that the road is long, which these treasures must travel. M. du Breuil remits the packets to a friend, who has correspondents, and this occasions many delays. You have rendered me avaricious and impatient; and I, like other courtiers, am insatiable for new favours. Will you, sir, make trial of M. Thiriot, who will remit the packets to me from Paris to Cirey by a certain conveyance? Accept, sir, with your usual goodness, every sincere protestation of the profound respect, the tender, the inviolable attachment, the esteem, the passion, in fine all the sentiments with which I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

October 24th, 1737.

ADMIRATION, respect, gratitude, and, suffer me once more to repeat, the tender attachment I feel for your royal highness, have dictated all my letters, and occupied my heart. At present the most poignant grief is mingled with these sentiments. I here send you an extract of a letter which I have just received from a man as much attached as I am to your royal highness. This extract will speak more powerfully than any language of mine*.

As I have no knowledge of the thing in question, except from the letter of M. Thiriot, I can only demonstrate to your royal highness the greatness of our present affliction. You can inspect the subject more closely, and you alone can

* As the misunderstanding between the prince royal and the king had become public, it was very natural that the enemies of M. de Voltaire should accuse him, being the friend of the prince, of writing whatever appeared against the king, especially since the calumny would be as injurious to the prince as it was to Voltaire.

tell how it is best to act. I could wish that the author of such a libel should suffer exemplary punishment. Probably, however, the culprit has been protected by the contempt which is attendant on an act so infamous; for his meanness and obscurity may doubtless have been his protector. Perhaps the king, your father, has not seen this wretched performance. The abuse of the vulgar seldom reaches the ears of kings; and, if it should be heard, it is but the buzzing of insects, which is usually disregarded, because it neither can injure nor offend. An obscure fellow may write a punishable satire, but cannot offend a sovereign. When any wretch is mad enough to libel a king, it is not the king whom he injures, but the name of the person under which he conceals himself to give his libel popularity. The clemency of your father might pardon the satire, but his justice would not suffer the calumniator to remain in peace were he known.

I own, sir, for my own part, that I am as sensibly afflicted as if I had been accused of having personally offended your royal highness. Is not any want of respect to the king equal, in effect, to an attack upon you personally? Perhaps the writing I mention is unknown; perhaps it has been known, and has already been
condemned

condemned to the fate of all ill-written libels, that of being soon forgotten; but I thought it was my duty to send you this information.

Permit me to add, sir, that, in the moments of relaxation which my ill health affords, it is my endeavour to render myself less unworthy of your goodness, by continuing to study those arts you protect, and which you yourself condescend to embellish. I regard the life which your royal highness leads as the model of private life; but should you ever ascend the throne, kings then ought to do what we do at present (we, insignificant as we are) they ought to make you their example.

The marchioness du Chatelet is as sensible of the honour of being remembered by you as she is worthy of that honour. Her mind is the counterpart of yours. We are formed to be your subjects. I am persuaded that, were you carefully to examine your titles, you would find the marquisate of Cirey was anciently dependent on Brandenburg. This is more certain than the foundation of Remusberg by Remus.

We remain in doubt whether the packet of October addressed to your royal highness, and the other for your amiable ambassador, are safely arrived.

I am,

I am, with the most profound respect, and with the most inviolable, most tender, affection, &c.

L E T T E R XXXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Cirey, October, 1737.

I RECEIVED the last letter which your royal highness did me the honour to write, dated September 27th. I am very anxious to know whether the packet I sent, as well as that which was addressed to M. von Kayserling, are safely come to hand; they were dated about the beginning of the month of August.

You command me, sir, to give you some account of my metaphysical doubts, and I take the liberty to send you an extract of a chapter on freedom. Here your royal highness will, at least, find candour, though you should at the same time discover ignorance. Would to God that all the ignorant were equally sincere!

Perhaps the love of humanity, by which all my thoughts are actuated, has led me astray in this work: perhaps my opinion that there would
neither

neither be virtue nor vice, punishment nor reward, and that society, especially among philosophers, would be an intercourse of malice and hypocrisy, did not man possess full and absolute freedom; perhaps, I say, this opinion has carried me too far. But, should you discover errors in my thoughts, condescend to pardon them, for the love of the principle in which they originated.

I always endeavour to make my metaphysics conform to morality. I have sincerely, and with all the attention of which I am capable, examined whether I could obtain any ideas of the human soul, and have found that the fruit of all my researches is ignorance. I discover that it is nearly the same with this thinking, free, and active principle as with God himself. My reason tells me God exists, but this same reason informs me I cannot know what God is. In effect, how should we understand what the soul is, when, if we happen to be born blind, we cannot form any idea of light. I therefore perceive with grief that every thing which has been written concerning the soul is unable to teach us the least truth.

My principal end, after having groped round this soul to divine its species, has been an endeavour to regulate it, for it is the spring of our
watch.

watch. All the fine ideas of Descartes concerning elasticity teach me nothing of the nature of this spring. I still remain ignorant of the cause of its elasticity ; however, I wind up the watch, and it keeps going, well or ill.

I examine man. Be the materials of his composition what they may, it is necessary to be convinced whether he partake of vice or of virtue. This is the most important point with respect to man. I do not mean with respect to any particular society, living under such and such particular laws, but with respect to the whole human race ; as it relates to you, sir, who are to be a king ; as it relates to the woodman in your forests, the Chinese doctor, or the American savage. Locke, the most sage of the metaphysicians with whom I am acquainted, seems, while rationally denying innate ideas, to think there is no universal moral principle ; and here I will dare to combat or rather to interpret the supposition of this great man. I allow, with him, there are, in reality, no innate ideas ; and it evidently follows that there is no innate moral proposition in our souls ; but does it follow, because we are born without a beard, that, inhabitants as we are of the old continent, our beards will not grow at a certain age ? We are not born able to walk, but all who are born with two legs will

will walk some day or other. In the same manner no person is born with an idea that it is necessary to be just, but God has so constructed the organs of man that we all, at a certain age, are agreed in this truth.

It appears evident to me that God meant we should live in society; like as he has given bees instinct, and the proper instruments to make honey. Our society would not be able to subsist without the ideas of just and unjust; he therefore has given us the power to acquire these ideas. True it is that our different customs will never permit us all to annex the same ideas to the term just. What is a crime in Europe would be virtue in Asia; so some German dishes do not please the gluttons of France; but God has formed both French and Germans in such a manner that they both love good cheer. Thus all societies have not the same laws, but no society lives without laws. Hence we find the good of society is uniform among men, from Pekin to Iceland, as the immutable rule of virtue. Whatever is useful to society will every where be good. This single idea at once conciliates all the contradictions which seem to exist in the morality of mankind. Theft was permitted at Lacedemon; but why? Because all things were there in common, and to steal

I

from

from a miser who hoarded only for himself that which the law gave to the public was to serve society.

It will be said there are savages who are cannibals, and who yet think they act properly. I answer that these savages have the same opinion as we have of just and unjust. They, like us, make war in fury, and from passion. The same crimes are every where committed; to eat the enemy is but an additional ceremony. The evil is not to put them on the spit, but to kill them; and I will venture to affirm there is no savage who thinks he does well to murder his friend. I saw four savages brought from Louisiana into France in 1723, and among them was a woman of a very mild temper. I asked her, by the aid of an interpreter, if she had not sometimes eaten the flesh of her enemies, and if she had not taken pleasure in the taste. She answered in the affirmative. I then demanded whether she would willingly have killed or caused to be killed one of her own countrymen, that she might eat him. She shuddered while she answered, and the horror she conceived against such a crime was visible.

I defy the most determined liar among travellers to dare to affirm that there is any tribe, or family, among whom it is permitted to break
a promise

a promise. I have good reason to believe that God has created certain animals to graze in common; others to be seen generally in pairs, and not in greater numbers; spiders to weave their webs; and that he has given to each species the necessary instruments for the works they are to perform. Man has received all that is requisite to live in society; like as he has received a stomach to digest, eyes to see, and a soul to judge.

Place two men upon earth, and whatever is good for them both they will call good, virtuous, and just. Place four, and nothing will be virtuous which is not agreeable to all the four. Should any one of the four eat the supper of his companion, or beat, or kill him, the others would surely rise against the act. What I have said of these four men may be said of all. Such, sir, is nearly the plan on which I have written my moral metaphysics; but when virtue is the question is it for me to speak in your presence?

What are your feeble claims from earth,
Or what the throne, your due by birth?
From worth and virtue you derive
What crowns and sceptres shall survive;
From heav'n you drew that heritage
Which makes the man and forms the sage.

My off'ings to your shrine I should not bring,
Were you not something greater than a king.

Be you the judge, great prince, of my opinions, for your mind is the tribunal to which my opinions appeal. Your royal highness inspires me with a desire for life, that my eyes may one day behold the Solomon of the North! But I fear I shall not be so happy as the good old Simeon. We never pass your portrait without repeating our hymn which begins,

Hope we for happiness on earth!

I wait for your decision on the history of Louis XIV. and on the elements of the Newtonian philosophy. Should the tribute I have paid be accepted with kindness, I hope my recompense will be to receive instruction.

I intreat your royal highness to deign to send me, by some safe conveyance (which I believe that of M. Thiriot to be) the memoirs you have had the goodness to promise me concerning the Czar. Not that I renounce poetry; it delights me more than ever, sir, since you have become a poet. I hope soon to send you something which may be represented on the theatre of Remusberg. I am highly angry that any one should have presented your royal highness with the wretched manuscript of *The Prodigal Son*,
which

which is in your possession, and which resembles my piece as much as a monkey resembles a man. I know no better alternative than that of printing it in my justification.

I have no terms sufficient to thank your royal highness for all your bounties. With what generosity, I had almost said tenderness, have you deigned to interest yourself concerning me! You write to me as Horace spoke to Mæcenas, and you are both Mæcenas and Horace. The marchioness du Chatelet, who participates my admiration, and whom you have permitted to join me in respect, profits by this permission. I am, with the most profound regard, and the most tender gratitude, &c.

ON THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

THE question of freedom is the most interesting of any we can examine, since we may affirm that on this question all morality depends. A thing so interesting well deserves that I should depart a little from my subject, to enter into the present discussion, and to place before the reader the principal objections which

have been made against freedom, that he may himself be able to judge of their value.

I know that freedom has very illustrious foes; I know that reasons have been alleged against it which, at a first view, may seduce; and it is these reasons that have actuated me to state and to refute them.

This subject has been rendered so confused that it is absolutely necessary to begin by defining what is understood by freedom, when we wish to speak of it so as to be understood ourselves.

I call freedom the power of thinking on a thing or not thinking, of moving or of not moving, conformable to the choice which the mind shall make. All the objections of those who deny freedom may be reduced to four principal ones, which I shall examine each after the other. The tendency of the first objection is to render the testimony of our conscience, and the interior feeling we have of freedom, doubtful. They pretend that we only imagine we have the intimate feeling of freedom, for want of paying attention to what passes within ourselves; and that, when we assiduously reflect on the causes of our actions, we, on the contrary, find they are all determined by necessity.

That, further, we cannot doubt but that there
are

are motions in our bodies which do not depend on the will ; such as the circulation of the blood, the palpitation of the heart, &c. Anger, also, or any other violent passion, often carries us out of ourselves, and causes us to commit actions which our reason disapproves. So many visible chains, with which we are shackled, prove, according to them, that our bondage in every other respect is similar.

Man, say they, is sometimes carried away by impulses, the agitation and violence of which he feels : at others, he is conducted by a gentle motion which he does not perceive, but by which he is in like manner overcome. He is a slave who does not continually feel the weight of his galling chains, but who is not therefore the less a slave.

This reasoning resembles the following. Men are sometimes ill, they are therefore never well. Is it not, on the contrary, a proof that he who feels his illness, and his slavery, has once been healthy and free ?

In a state of drunkenness, when hurried away by any violent passion, or when there is any subversion of our faculties, &c. our freedom is no longer obeyed by our senses, and we then are no longer free to use our freedom ; like as

we are unable to move an arm which has been struck dead by the palsy.

Freedom in man is the health of the soul. Few people enjoy that health in an entire and unalterable state. Our freedom is feeble and bounded, like our other faculties; but we strengthen it by accustoming ourselves to meditation, and by conquering our passions; and this exercise of the soul renders it something more vigorous. Yet, whatever efforts we may make, we never can subject all our desires to our reason, and there ever will be in our soul, as in our body, some involuntary motions; for we are neither sage, nor free, nor healthy, but in a very small degree.

I know men may so twist and abuse reason as to combat the freedom of animals, and to conceive them machines which neither possess sensation, desire, nor will, though they have the appearance of them all. I know that systems, or, in other words, errors, may be forged to explain their nature. But, when we interrogate ourselves, we shall be obliged to confess, if we are candid, that we have a will; that we have the power to act, to move our bodies, to apply our minds to certain thoughts, and to suspend our wishes, &c.

The enemies of freedom, therefore, must allow

low that our interior sensations assure us we are free; and I will venture to affirm there is no person who really doubts of his own freedom, and whose conscience does not rise against the artificial sentiment by which he would persuade himself that all his actions are subject to necessity. Men, therefore, are not satisfied with denying this intimate conviction of being free, but they proceed still further. Though it should be granted you, say they, that you have an interior conviction of being free, still it would prove nothing, for our feelings deceive us respecting our freedom, like as our eyes deceive us concerning the bulk of the sun, when they teach us to imagine that the sun's disc is about two feet wide, although its diameter is, really, compared to the earth's diameter, as a hundred to one.

The following answer, I believe, may be given to this objection. The things here compared together are, in themselves, very different. I cannot and ought not to see objects but in the direct ratio of their size, and in the inverse ratio of the square of their distance. Such are the mathematical laws of optics, and such is the nature of our organs, that, if my sight were able to perceive the real size of the sun, I could not then perceive any object on earth; and such a sight, far from being useful, would be prejudicial to me. The same may be said of the sense

of hearing, or of smelling. I have not, and cannot have, these sensations more or less strong (all other things in a like proportion) than according as the sonorous or odoriferous bodies are at a greater or a less distance. God, therefore, has not deceived me by obliging me to see that which is far off of a size proportionate to its distance. But were I to believe myself free, and not to be so, God must have created me purposely to deceive me; for our actions appear to us free precisely in the same manner as they would appear if we really were free.

Nothing more remains to those who maintain the negative, except the mere possibility that we are so formed as to be always inevitably deceived respecting our freedom; and this possibility itself is only founded on an absurdity, since the result of this perpetual illusion, in which we should be kept by God, would be that the Supreme Being acts in a manner highly unworthy of his infinite wisdom.

Let it not be said that it is unworthy of a philosopher to have recourse here to God, for the being of God having once been proved, as it incontestably is, he certainly is the author of my freedom if I am free, as he is the author of my error if, having made me a being purely passive, he has given me the irresistible conviction

viction of a freedom which he has not in reality bestowed.

This interior conviction, which we have of our freedom, is so strong that nothing less is necessary, to make us doubt of it, than a demonstration which should prove that for us to be free would imply contradiction. Of such demonstrations there certainly are none.

Let us add to all these reasons, which overthrow the objections of the necessarians, that they are obliged each moment to contradict their own opinion by their actions; for we should in vain allege the most specious reasoning against our freedom, while we should continue to act as if we were free, agreeable to that interior conviction of our freedom which is so deeply engraven in the heart, and which has, in despite of our prejudices, so much influence over our actions.

Driven into this intrenchment, those who deny freedom would proceed to say—All which this internal conviction, on which you so loudly insist, informs us of is that the motions of our bodies, and the thoughts of our minds, are obedient to our will; but this will itself is ever necessarily determined by that which our understanding judges to be the best; like as the beam of the scale is always turned by the greater weight.

The links of our chain are connected with each other after this manner.

Ideas, as well of sensation as of reflection, present themselves to the mind with or without its consent, for we do not form our own ideas. Thus, when two ideas present themselves to the understanding, as for example the idea of going to bed, or the idea of going to walk, we absolutely must make choice of one of the two, or reject them both. We therefore are not free, with respect to the act itself of willing.

It is further certain that, if we choose, we shall indubitably decide for sleeping, or walking, according as the understanding shall judge the one or the other to be most useful and convenient. Now the understanding can only judge that to be good and convenient which appears so to be; there always are differences in the things, and these differences necessarily determine the judgment; for it would be impossible to choose between two indiscernible things, if such could be found*. All our actions, therefore, are necessary, since, according to this confession, we continually act conformable to the will; and since it is proved—I. That our will is necessarily

* I suspect the author meant two things exactly similar, without difference, rather than indiscernible. T.

determined

determined by the decision of the understanding;
 II. That this decision depends on the nature of our ideas; and, III. That our ideas do not depend upon ourselves.

As this argument, in which the enemies of freedom place their principal force, has several branches, so likewise it has several answers.

I. When it is said that we are not free with respect to the act of willing, that proves nothing against our freedom; for freedom consists in acting or in not acting, and not in willing or not willing.

II. It is affirmed our understanding cannot avoid judging that to be good which appears so to be, and that the understanding determines the will, &c. This reasoning is founded only upon making, unperceived by ourselves, distinct beings of the will and the understanding, which are supposed to act on each other, and afterward to determine our actions; but this is a mistake which need only to be perceived in order to be rectified; for we easily feel that to will, to judge, &c. are nothing more than different functions of our understanding. Again, to have perceptions, and to judge that a thing is true and reasonable, when we perceive that it effectually is so, is not an action but a simple passion: it is in effect to feel what we feel, and to see what we see;

fee; there is no connection between the approbation and the act, between that which is passive and that which is active.

III. The differences between the things are said to determine our understanding. But those who say so have not considered that the freedom of indifference, previous to the dictamen of the understanding, is a real contradiction in things which have absolute differences between themselves; for, according to this excellent definition of freedom, fools, idiots, and animals themselves, would be more free than we are; and we should be the more so the less ideas we had, for we should less perceive the differences of things; that is to say in proportion as we should be more silly, which is absurd. If this be the freedom we want, I do not perceive any great reason we have to complain. The freedom of indifference in discernible things is therefore no real freedom.

With respect to the power of choosing between things perfectly similar, as we are acquainted with none such, it is difficult to say what might then happen. I know not whether this power would be any perfection, but it is very certain that the self-moving power, the only and true source of freedom, cannot be destroyed by the indiscernibility of two objects; therefore, so long

long as man shall possess this self-moving power, man will be free. ,

IV. With respect to our will being always determined by what our understanding judges to be best, I reply, the will, that is to say the last perception or approbation of the understanding (for this is the sense in which the word is understood in the objection) the will, I say, can have no influence on that self-moving power in which freedom consists. Thus the will is never the cause of our actions, though it be the occasion of them ; for an abstract idea can have no physical influence over the self-moving physical power which exists in man ; and this power is exactly the same before and after the last decision of the understanding.

True it is that, morally speaking, there is a contradiction in terms when we say a prudent being is guilty of some folly, and that consequently he will certainly prefer that which his understanding judges to be the best ; but there will be no physical contradiction in this, for physical necessity and moral necessity are two things which must be carefully distinguished. The first is always absolute, but the second is only a contingency ; and this moral necessity is exceedingly compatible with the most perfect natural and physical freedom.

The

The physical power of acting is therefore that which constitutes man a free being, be the use he shall make of it what it may ; and the privation of this power would alike suffice to render him a purely passive being, in despite of his intelligence ; for a stone which I should throw would not be the less a passive being, if it had an interior feeling of the motion which I communicated. In fine, to be determined by that which appears to us the best, is as great a perfection as is the power of doing that which we have judged to be the best.

We are able to suspend our wishes, and to examine that which seems to us the best, in order to have the power of choosing : this is a part of our freedom. The power of acting afterward conformable to this choice is what renders this freedom full and entire ; and it is because we make an ill use of the power which we have of suspending our wishes, and because we determine with too much promptitude, that we are guilty of so many errors.

The more our determinations are founded on good reasons the more do we approach perfection ; and it is this perfection, in a superior degree, which characterizes the freedom of beings more perfect than we are, and of God himself.

For here let it be well remembered that God

himself is only free after this manner. The moral necessity of acting always for the best is, in the same degree, greater in God, as a being infinitely perfect is superior to man. The true and only freedom, therefore, is the power of doing that which we choose to do, and all the objections which are made against this kind of freedom are alike destructive of the freedom of God and of the freedom of man; consequently should it follow that man is not free because his will is always determined by the things which his understanding judges to be the best, it must follow that neither is God free, and that all would be effect without cause in the universe, which is absurd.

Those persons, if any there are, who shall dare to doubt of the freedom of God, must argue thus. God being infinitely wise is obliged, from a necessity in his nature, to will always the best: his actions, therefore, are all the result of necessity.

Three answers may be made to this argument.

I. We must begin by fixing what is the best, relative to God, and antecedent to his will, which, perhaps, will not be easily done. The argument, therefore, is reduced to say that God is under the necessity of doing that which seems to him the best, or, in other words, of executing his

his will. Now, I ask whether there be any other sort of freedom, and whether to do that which we judge to be the most advantageous, and that, in fine, which pleases us, be not to be precisely free.

II. The necessity of always acting for the best can only be a moral necessity, and a moral necessity is not an absolute necessity.

III. In fine, though it be impossible for God, morally impossible, to derogate from his moral attributes, the necessity of always acting for the best, which is a necessary consequence, is no more destructive of his freedom than the necessity of being omnipresent, eternal, immense, &c.

Man, therefore, as an intelligent being, is under the necessity of willing that which his judgment shall tell him is the best. Were he otherwise, he must be subjected to the determination of some other being, and would no longer be free; for to will that which would not give pleasure is an absolute contradiction, and to do that which we judge the best, and which does give pleasure, is to be free. We are scarcely able to conceive a being more free than one who has the power to do that which he pleases, and, so long as man shall have that freedom, he is as free as it is possible for freedom to make him, to speak in the language of Locke.

The

The following argument may be called the Achilles of the enemies of freedom—God is omniscient; the past, the present, and the future, are alike subject to his view. Now, if God know all I ought to do, I must absolutely determine to act according to the manner in which he has foreseen my actions. Therefore, I am not free; for if any future thing were a contingency, or an uncertainty, if it depended on the freedom of man, in a word, if it might or might not happen, it could not have been foreseen by God; he, consequently, could not be omniscient.

There are several answers to this argument, which, at first, appears to be invincible.

I. The prescience of God has no influence on the mode of the existence of things. That prescience does not impart any greater certitude to things than they would have had though prescience had not existed; and, were no other reasons to be discovered, the single consideration of the certitude of the divine prescience would be incapable to destroy that freedom; for the prescience of God is not the cause of the existence of things, but is itself founded on their existence. Every thing which to-day exists cannot cease to exist while it exists; and it was yesterday, and from all eternity, as certainly true

that the things which exist to-day were to exist, as it is now certain that these things do exist.

II. The simple prescience of an action, before it be performed, differs in nothing from the knowledge we have of it, after it is performed. Thus prescience changes nothing in the certainty of the event. For, let us for a moment suppose man to be free, and that his actions could not be foreseen; would there not be, notwithstanding that supposition, the same certainty of the event in the nature of things? And, in despite of freedom, would there not have been as great a certainty, yesterday, and from all eternity, that I should perform such an action to-day, as there actually is after it is performed. Thus, whatever difficulty there may be in conceiving the manner in which the prescience of God agrees with our freedom, as this prescience only includes the certainty of an event, which would indubitably be found in the things themselves, although it had not been foreseen, it is evident it does not induce any necessity, nor destroy the possibility of freedom.

The prescience of God is precisely the same thing as his knowledge. Thus, in the same manner as his knowledge has no influence over the things which actually are, neither has his prescience any influence over those which are

to come; and, if freedom be in other respects possible, the power which God has of judging infallibly of free events cannot make them become the events of necessity, for that would make it requisite that an action should be the effect of freedom and of necessity at the same time.

III. It is not, I own, possible for us to conceive how God can foresee future things, unless we suppose a chain of necessary causes; for to say with the schoolmen that God is omnipresent, not indeed in his own measure, but in another measure, *non in mensurâ propriâ sed in mensurâ aliâ*, this would be to render the most important question that ever was examined by man a subject of laughter. It is much better to avow that the difficulties we meet with in reconciling the prescience of God to our freedom originate in our ignorance of the attributes of God, and not in the absolute impossibility which exists between the prescience of God and our freedom; for the agreement of his prescience with our freedom is not more incomprehensible to us than his ubiquity, his infinite duration in the past, and his infinite duration in the future, as well as many other things which it is impossible to deny, or to understand. The infinite attributes of the Supreme Being form an abyss, in

which our feeble knowledge is lost. We know not, and are unable to know, what relation there is between the prescience of the Creator and the freedom of the creature, and as the great Newton says, "*Ut cæcus ideam non habet colorum, sic nos ideam non habemus modorum, quibus Deus sapientissimus sensit et intelligit omnia.*" Which may be rendered—"Like as the blind have no idea of colours; so cannot we comprehend the manner in which a being infinitely wise, sees and knows all things."

IV. I shall further ask those who, from the consideration of the divine prescience, deny the freedom of man, whether God had the power to create free creatures? They must necessarily reply he had that power; for God has the power to do all things which do not imply a contradiction; and there is no contradiction implied except in the communication between the attributes to which the idea of necessary existence and absolute independence is attached. Now, freedom certainly is not in this predicament; for were it so it would be impossible we should imagine ourselves free, as it is that we should imagine ourselves infinite, omnipotent, &c. We are obliged therefore to own that God was able to create free beings, or to say that he is not omnipotent; which I believe no person will say.

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If, therefore, God was able to create free beings, it may be supposed he has created them; and, if to create free beings and to foresee their determinations were a contradiction, wherefore could not God, when creating free beings, have the power to remain ignorant of the use they were to make of the freedom he had bestowed? To confine it simply to contradictions is not to limit the divine power. Now, to create free beings, and to lay any restraint whatever on their determinations, is a contradiction in terms; for it is to create beings which are free and not free at the same time. Thus, it inevitably follows, from the power which God has to create free beings, that if he have created such beings, his prescience either does not destroy their freedom or he does not foresee their actions; and he who, on this supposition, should deny the prescience of God, would not more deny his omniscience than he who should say that God cannot do that which implies a contradiction would deny his omnipotence.

But we are not reduced to make this supposition, for it is not necessary that I should comprehend the manner in which the divine prescience and the freedom of man may agree, in order to admit them both. It is sufficient for me to be assured that I am free, and that God

foresees all which is to happen, for I am then obliged to conclude that his omniscience and his prescience lay no restraint on my freedom, although I cannot conceive how this happens; like as when I have proved to myself there is a God, I am obliged to admit the creation *ex nihilo*, although it is impossible for me to conceive it.

V. This argument of the prescience of God, if it be of any force against the freedom of man, is equally destructive of that of God; for if God foresee all which is to happen, it is therefore not in his power to forbear doing that which he has foreseen he should do. But it has been demonstrated above that God is free. Freedom therefore is possible, and God had the power to give his creatures a small portion of freedom, like as he has given them a small portion of intelligence. Freedom in God consists in the power of thinking always as he pleases, and acting always as he wills. The freedom given by God to man is the feeble and limited power of performing certain motions, and applying himself to certain thoughts. The freedom of children, who never reflect, solely consists in willing and performing certain motions. Were we always free we should be like God. Let us be satisfied with that inheritance which appertains

appertains to the rank we hold in nature; but let us not, because we have not the attributes of God, renounce the faculties of man.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Remusberg, November 12th, 1737.

I OWN nothing is more deceitful than to judge of men from their reputation. The history of the czar which I send you obliges me to retract what the high opinion I had entertained of this monarch had induced me to affirm. He will appear very different to you in this history from the picture your imagination has formed, and, if I may be so allowed to say, we shall have a great man the less in the real world. A concurrence of fortunate circumstances, favourable accidents, and the ignorance of foreigners, have metamorphosed the czar into a heroical phantom, of the grandeur of which no person has thought proper to doubt. A sage historian, in part a witness of his life, indiscreetly draws the curtain, and shews us the sovereign with all the

defects of men, and few of their virtues. He is no longer that universal genius which all conceives and all would penetrate, but a man governed by whims, which had sufficient novelty to dazzle, and impart a degree of splendour. He is no longer the intrepid warrior who fears and knows not peril, but a cowardly and timid prince, whose brutality forsakes him in danger; cruel in peace, feeble in war, admired by strangers, hated by his subjects, and, in fine, a man who extended despotism as far as a monarch could extend it, and with whom fortune was the substitute of wisdom. In other respects, a great mechanic, laborious, assiduous, and ready to sacrifice his all for the gratification of his curiosity.

Such will the czar Peter the Great appear to you in these memoirs, and though we are obliged to obliterate an infinite number of prejudices before we can prevail on ourselves to view him thus, stripped of all his great qualities, it is however very certain the author advances nothing which he has not fully the power to prove.

Hence we may conclude we never can be sufficiently on our guard when judging of great men. Those who have contemplated Pompey with the eyes of admiration in the Roman history, will behold him with a very different aspect,

pect, when they read his character in the letters of Cicero. Properly speaking, the fame of men is the gift of the historian. Some appearances of great actions have induced the writers of this age to favour the czar, and their imaginations have very generously supplied whatever they thought was deficient in the portrait.

Alexander, perhaps, was only a famous freebooter; yet Quintus Curtius has found the means, whether it were to abuse the credulity of the people or to display the elegance of his own style, to make all succeeding ages believe him to be one of the greatest men the earth ever bore. How many examples do historians furnish of a marked predilection in behalf of the fame of certain princes!

But if they have given us examples of their good will, history also supplies us with others of their hatred and detraction. Recollect the various characteristics attributed to Julian, called the apostate; the hatred, the fury, the rage of your bishop saints have so disfigured him that his true features are scarcely discoverable in the portrait which malignity has painted. This emperor has for ages been held in horror; so great was the impression these impostors made on the minds of men. A sage at length arose, who, perceiving the artifice of the monkish historians,

torians, restored Julian his virtues, and confounded the calumny of the fathers of your church.

Every action of man is subject to different interpretations; the best may be varnished with poison, and the worst may be so glossed over as to render them excusable or even praise worthy. Thus the partiality or the impartiality of the historian decides the judgment of the public, and of posterity.

I put into your hands every thing I could collect most curious relative to the history for which you requested materials. These memoirs contain facts equally uncommon and unknown. For this reason, I flatter myself I have furnished you with an authority which you could not have obtained by any other means, and I shall have a similar merit, in relation to your work, to him who should supply good materials for the building of an elegant edifice, to be constructed by some famous architect.

Have the goodness to give the (inclosed) epistle to the incomparable Emily. I consecrated my labours when writing to her, and in return I request she will send me a severe criticism; for, if I have had the rashness to rise too high, my very fall must be glorious; like those famous wretches whose crimes have given them
renown,

renown. I add to all this some other children of my leisure, whom I intreat you to correct with didactic severity.

Write to me, I intreat you, by the bearer of this letter. It is above a month since I received any letters from Cirey. Do not in vain alarm my friendship with fears concerning your health; say, at least, I live, I breathe; you owe me these little attentions more than any other person, since few can have all the esteem for you which I entertain; and, even if they had, they certainly would not have all that gratitude with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Remusberg, November 19th, 1757.

I HAVE not been the last to perceive our correspondence began to languish. Two months had nearly glided away since I had heard from you, when, about a week ago, I sent off a large packet for Cirey. The friendship I have for you gave me infinite alarms: I imagined that indisposition prevented you from an-

swering my letters, and I sometimes even apprehended that the delicacy of your constitution had ceded to the violence and obstinacy of the disease; in fine, I was in the situation of a miser, who believes his treasures are in imminent danger.

In the interim your letter arrived, and not only dissipated my fears, but likewise taught me to feel all the pleasure which an intercourse with such a person is capable of producing. A correspondence between individuals is a barter of thoughts, but I have the advantage in the traffic; for you return me wit and truth. What man could be so stupid, or so little interested, as not to esteem such a commerce? The truth is, sir, when we are once acquainted with you, we know not how to live without you, and your letters are to me become one of the indispensable necessities of life; your ideas are the food of my mind.

In the packet which I have just sent off, you will find the history of the czar Peter I.. The person who wrote it was perfectly ignorant of the use to which it was destined; he supposed he wrote only to gratify my curiosity, and for that reason he imagined himself permitted to speak with all possible freedom of the government and the state of Russia. You will find in
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the history, truths which, in this our age, but little accord with the press. If I could not entirely depend on your prudence, I should think myself obliged to warn you that certain facts, which this manuscript contains, ought either wholly to be retrenched, or treated with all possible circumspection; you might otherwise expose yourself to the resentment of the court of Russia. I should certainly be suspected of having furnished you with the anecdotes contained in this history, and the suspicion would as infallibly fall on the author by whom they had been collected. The work will not be read, but the whole world will not cease to admire you.

How different is a contemplative life to the lives of those men who are continually in action! A man who is only occupied in thinking may think well, yet express himself ill; but the man of activity, though he should express himself with all imaginable grace, ought not to act feebly. This was the kind of weakness with which Charles II. of England has been reproached. It has been said of this monarch that no word ever escaped him which was not in its proper place, and that he never performed one action that could be called praise-worthy*.

* The prince alludes to the well-known remark, that "Charles never said a foolish thing, nor ever did a wise one." T.

It often happens that those who declaim most against the actions of others act still worse themselves, when they happen to be under the same circumstances. I have reason to fear lest this should be one day my fate, since it is much more easy to criticise than to perform; and to lay down than to conform to precepts. Men are indeed, after all, so subject to be seduced, either by their own presumption, the splendour of their situation, or the artifice of the wicked, that their breed may be violated, although their intentions may have been the most upright and equitable.

Is not the advantageous idea which you have conceived of me founded on the description which has been given you by my dear Cesario? Truly happy is the man who is possessed of such a friend: yet suffer me to undeceive you, and to trace my own character in a few words, that you may not longer misconceive me; on condition, however, that you will not accuse me of the defect of your deceased friend Chaulieu, who continually spoke of himself.

Confide in what I tell you; I have little merit, and little knowledge, but I have much good will, and an inexhaustible fund of esteem and friendship for all persons of distinguished virtue; add to this, I am capable of that uniform-constancy

stancy which true friendship requires. I have judgment enough to do you the justice you deserve, but I have not enough to prevent myself from writing bad verses.

You will receive a sufficient quantity of these bad verses with the last packet which I have addressed to you. The *Henriade* and your magnificent poetical works have induced me to do something of the same kind; but my design is abortive, and it is just I should receive correction from the person who first held out the temptation.

Nothing can equal the gratitude I feel for the trouble which you have taken to correct my ode; it is a trouble by which you have very sensibly obliged me, nor do I know how enough to praise your generous sincerity. But how can I retouch this ode, after it has been rendered perfect by you; or how can I endure to listen to the stammering of my own muse, after having heard yours sing so delightfully!

Were it not an abuse of your friendship, and a robbery of time, which you so usefully employ for the public good, I should intreat you to give me some rules by which to distinguish words such as are proper for poetry from those that appertain to prose. Boileau, in his *Art of Poetry*, has not touched upon this subject, nor do I know

know any other author who has. You, sir, better than any one, are capable of instructing me in an art of which you are the ornament and the honour, and of which you may be named the father.

The example of the incomparable Emily animates and encourages me in my studies; I implore succour from the two deities of Cirey, that they may aid me to surmount difficulties which lie in my road: you are my Lares, my tutelary gods, who preside in my Lyceum, and in my academy.

Sublime Emilia and divine Voltaire
Are precious gifts, sent down to bless mankind,
Once in a thousand years by pitying gods.

Cesar alone can have communicated to you music of my composition. I very much fear lest French ears should be but little flattered by Italian sounds, and that an art which affects only the senses can give no pleasure to persons who find so many charms in intellectual delights. Should it however happen that my music should meet with your approbation, I will willingly undertake to tickle your ears, provided you will not tire of affording me instruction.

I intreat you to salute the goddess Emily on my part, and to assure her of my admiration.

If men are estimable for trampling prejudice and error under foot, women are still more so, because they have a longer journey to take before they can arrive thus far, and it must cost them more to pull down than us to build. How deserving of praise is the marchioness du Chatelet for having preferred the love of truth to the illusions of the senses, and for having abandoned the false and momentary pleasures of this world, that she might totally addict herself to the study of the most sublime philosophy !

No person can refute M. Wolf with more politeness than you have done. You render justice to this great man, and at the same time remark the feeble parts of his system ; but it is a defect common to all systems to have one side less strongly fortified than the remainder. The works of men always partake of humanity, nor must we expect perfect productions from the human understanding. Philosophers in vain would combat error ; the hydra will not suffer herself to be exterminated, and new heads spring up as fast as the old are hewn away. It frequently happens that, from the ashes of error, error takes birth. In a word, the system which contains the least contradiction, the least impertinence, and the fewest gross absurdities, ought to be regarded as the best.

We cannot with justice require metaphysicians to give us an exact map of their empire. It would be very embarrassing to write a geographical description of a country which no man has ever seen, from which no intelligence is received, and which is inaccessible. These gentlemen, therefore, cannot perform impossibilities. They retail their romances according to the most mathematical order they have been able to imagine, and their reasons, like the spider's thread, are so fine as scarcely to be perceptible. If Descartes, Locke, Newton, and Wolf, have not been able to interpret the enigma, we have reason to believe, and even to affirm, posterity shall not be more fortunate in its discoveries than we have been.

These systems you have considered like a sage; you have seen the insufficiency of them, and have added very judicious reflections: but this treasure, which I possess by attorney, is in the keeping of Emily. I dare not reclaim it, notwithstanding the desire I have so to do, and I pacify myself by modestly reminding you that I may not renounce my rights.

If nature, sir, could make an exception to a general rule, it certainly ought to be in your favour: your soul ought to be immortal, as the reward of your virtues. Heaven has bestowed

upon you pledges of such marked predilection that, if there be a future life, I dare affirm you shall enjoy eternal felicity.

This letter will be remitted to you by the intervention of Thiriot. I only wish my soul had wings that it might fly to Cirey; yet I also wish for wings for this material, this real part of myself, that I might, by word of mouth, assure you of the infinite esteem with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXXV.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Remusberg, December 6, 1737.

MISERABLE human inconstancy! Would an orator exclaim, were he informed of the resolution I had made no more to meddle with my ode, and did he see how easily that resolution was broken. I confess I have no sufficient reason to allege in my excuse, nor do I now write to make any apology to you; far from that, I regard you as a certain and sincere friend, to whom I may safely avow all my foibles. You are my philosophic confessor, and I have so good an opinion of your indulgence

P 2

that

that I have no fear in acquainting you with my follies.

Here follow a sufficient number. An epistle which will make you perspire, recollecting the labour it has cost me ; a little tale, free enough, which will give you an ill opinion of my catholicism, and a still worse of my heretical contentions ; and, finally, an ode, which you had corrected, and which I have been rash enough to re-write.

Let me again intreat you to recollect, sir, that I send these pieces, submitting them to your criticism, and do not come a pauper for praise. I feel how ridiculous it would be for me to enter the lists with you, and very well comprehend that if some Paphlagonian had thought proper to send Latin verses to Virgil, to defy him to combat, Virgil could not have done better than, instead of answering him, to have advised his relations to have shut him up in the hospital for lunatics, if any such hospital there was in Paphlagonia. In short I request you would act the part of the severe, the inflexible critic.

I am at present in expectation of your letters, the arrival of which I promise myself every post-day. About the time when the letters are delivered, my servants are all on the scout to bring me your packet ; I presently become impatient myself,

myself, run to the window, and, wearied at length to perceive that nothing comes, return to my usual occupations. If I hear any noise in the anti-chamber, there I am—Well, what is it?—Give me my letters. How! None!—My imagination travels much faster than the post. After this has continued some hours, my letters arrive; I open them, I endeavour to discover your writing often in vain, and when I perceive it, my haste is too great to break the seal. I read, but in such a hurry that I am often obliged to begin again, till I have read them thrice over, before my mind is sufficiently calm to comprehend what it is I have read; and it frequently happens that I do not succeed till the morrow.

Men combine a certain number of ideas to form that being which they call happiness. If they only possess this ideal being imperfectly, or in part, they break out into bitter complaints, and often into reproaches against the injustice of Providence, for having refused what their imagination so liberally adjudges to be their due. This is a sensation manifest in myself. Your letters give me so much pleasure when I receive them that I have a good right to rank them among the things which contribute to my happiness. Hence you will easily deduce that

not to receive any is unhappiness, and that you alone are the cause of this misfortune. I sometimes blame du Breuil Tronchin, at others the distance of the places, and often even dare to accuse Emily herself.

Do not fear, however, I wish to become burthensome to you; or that, notwithstanding the pleasure I find in conversing with you, my importunate friendship would lay you under constraint: far to the contrary; I too well know the value of freedom to deprive those persons who are dear to me of this blessing; I only require some signs of life from you, some marks of remembrance, a little friendship, much sincerity, and a firm persuasion of the perfect esteem with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Cirey, December 20, 1737.

ON the 12th of the present month, I received a letter from your royal highness, dated November the 19th. In this letter you have deigned

deigned to inform me that you have had the goodness to send me a packet, containing memoirs on the government of the czar Peter I. and at the same time to remind me, with your usual prudence, of the use it is my duty to make of these materials. The sole use I shall make of them, sir, will be to send your royal highness the work put into such a form as you could wish, which shall not appear till you have first sealed it with your approbation. This is the manner in which I would act in whatever quits my hands, and with this view I take the liberty at present to send you, by way of Paris, and under cover of M. Borck, a tragedy which I have lately finished, and which I submit to your judgment. It is my wish that my packet should, at least, travel with greater haste toward you than yours has done on its road to me.

Your royal highness informs me the packet containing the memoirs of the czar, and other things of much higher value to me, was sent on the 10th of November. Thus more than six weeks have glided away, and I have not yet heard any news of it. Deign, sir, to add to your favours that of informing me of the means you have chosen, and to recommend care to those in whom you have confided. When your royal highness shall condescend to honour me

with your letters and your commands, and to speak to me with that confidential goodness which delights me, I imagine you cannot do better than to send your letters to M. Pidol, postmaster at Treves. The only caution necessary is to pay the post as far as Treves, and they will be addressed under the cover of M. Pidol to d'Artigny at Bar-le Duc. With respect to any packets which your royal highness may send, perhaps the way of Paris, by the intervention of, and addressed to, M. Thiriot, will be the most convenient.

Be not weary, sir, of enriching Cirey with your gifts. The ears of madame du Chatelet are of all countries, as are both your mind and hers. She is well acquainted with Italian music, nor is she a general lover of the music of princes. The late duke of Orleans composed a detestable opera called Panthea; but you, sir, are neither prince nor king; to us you are a man of genius.

It is said that your royal highness has sent some charming verses to madame de la Popelinière. You must be told, sir, that you are adored in France, and that you are there regarded as the young Solomon of the North. I must repeat it is a loss to us that you are not born to reign elsewhere. An estate of a million (of livres) or less,

less, a year; a pleasant palace in a temperate climate; friends instead of subjects; living surrounded by the arts and pleasures, and indebted for the admiration and respect paid by men to yourself alone; all these perhaps would be equal to a kingdom. But it is your duty one day to render the Prussians happy. Oh how much are they envied!

You command me, sir, to send you some rules by which you may distinguish those words in the French language which appertain to prose, from those which are consecrated to poetry. It were to be wished that any such rules existed; but we scarcely have any for our language. I suspect that languages gain establishment like laws; new wants, which are only perceived by degrees, have given birth to laws which apparently are contradictory. It seems that men wish to be governed and to speak by chance. However, to reduce the subject to some kind of order, I will distinguish ideas, turns, and poetical phrases.

A poetical idea is, as your royal highness knows, a splendid figure, which is the substitute of the natural idea of the thing in question. For example, in prose I should say, *There is a young prince in the world who possesses numerous talents*

talents and abhors envy and fanaticism. But in verse I should exclaim—

Deep in the noble bosom of this prince
 A love for ev'ry virtue, ev'ry art,
 Thou Pallas, thou Astrea didst implant !
 Envy, with treach'rous heart and eye oblique,
 And Superstition, arm'd with all her brands
 To fire the world, fall lifeless at his feet !

A poetical turn is an inversion, of which prose will not admit. I should not say in prose, *A prince effeminate of corrupters political* ; but, *political corrupters of an effeminate prince*. I should not say

Such, and less gen'rous, on Epirus' shores,
 When th' empire of the world was in dispute,
 Entrusting to the waves, and brawling winds,
 The future destiny of Earth and Rome,
 Pompey and Neptune in defiance holding,
 Cæsar oppos'd his fortune to the storm.

The Cæsar of the sixth line is a turn purely poetical, and were I writing in prose I should begin with Cæsar.

Those words which are wholly reserved for poetry, I mean poetry of the noblest kind, are few in number. Thus, for example, we should not, in prose, call horses courfers ; the crown a diadem ; the kingdom of France an empire ; a coach

coach a car; actions exploits; the sky the empyrean; the north wind Boreas, &c.

The words used in the familiar style are nearly the same, whether in verse or prose; but I will venture to observe that I do not admire the freedom, which is often taken, of intermingling in a work which ought to be uniform, in an epistle or in a satire, not only various styles but various languages; as, for example, that of Marot and that of the present day. Such caprice displeases me as much as a picture would in which the caricatures of Calot and the low humour of Teniers should be jumbled with the sublimity of Raphael. It seems to me that this mixture spoils the language, and only tends to lead foreigners astray.

But the reading and the knowledge of good authors must have taught your royal highness more than any reflections of mine can convey.

With respect to the metaphysics of M. Wolf, he appears to me to have generally adopted the principles of Leibnitz. I regard them both as very great philosophers; but they were men, and therefore subject to error. He who may discover these errors may be far from being their equal. A soldier may be very able to criticize his general, without being capable of commanding so much as a battalion.

You

You charm me, sir, as much by the diffidence you have of yourself as by your great talents. The marchioness du Chatelet, who personally admires you as highly as I do, adds her respects to mine. With these sentiments, and with those of the most devoted and tender gratitude, I am, while life shall remain, &c.

L E T T E R XXXVII,

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

December, 1737.

YOUR royal highness should have received an answer from the marchioness du Chatelet by the favour of M. Pløetz. But as M. Pløetz has neither written to inform us of the receipt of that letter nor of that of a tolerably large packet, which I addressed to him a week before for your royal highness, I take the liberty this time of writing by way of M. Thiriot,

I informed you, sir, that, on a first glance, I gave the preference to the epistle on retirement, and to that amiable description of the well employed leisure which you enjoy; but I
fear

fear at present I must retract. I do not find any fault committed against language in the epistle to Pefne, in which every thing breathes good taste. The painter of the mind here writes to the ordinary painter, and I dare assure you, sir, that the six last lines, for example, are written in a masterly manner.

Abandonne tes saints, entourés de rayons ;
 Sur des sujets brillans exerce tes crayons ;
 Peins-nous d'Amaryllis les grâces ingénues,
 Les Nymphes des forêts, les Grâces demi-nues :
 Et souviens-toi, toujours, que c'est au seul Amour
 Que ton art, si charmant, doit son être, et le jour *.

Boileau would have written thus. You will suppose this to be flattery ; you are formed, sir, to remain ignorant of your own worth.

The epistle to M. du Duhan is very worthy of you ; it is the product of a sublime mind, and a grateful heart. Your royal highness has apparently been educated by M. Duhan. He is a happy man. Never did prince before so reward his tutor. I perceive, on reading all

* Reject thy ray surrounded saint,
 And henceforth nobler subjects paint ;
 Depict sweet Beauty's lovely face,
 The woodland Nymph, the bathing Grace ;
 Forget not Love did first impart
 The knowledge of the painter's art.

you

you have deigned to send me, that you have not one false thought. I occasionally find errors of language, which were impossible to avoid ; for how could you divine, for example, that *nourricier* is a word of three syllables, and not of four ; that *aient* is one syllable and not two.

You did not form our language, but you think *sapere est principium et fons*. The spirit of truth always does what it does well. You deign to amuse yourself in writing French verses, and Italian music ; and you seize the beauties of each. You are an excellent connoisseur in painting. In fine, a taste for the true is every where your guide, and it is impossible but that this great quality, which is your chief characteristic, after having made you yourself happy, must make a whole people happy likewise. You will be on the throne what you are in retirement ; you will reign as you think, and as you write. If your royal highness somewhat depart from the truth, it is in the praises you bestow on me, and this error itself originates in your goodness.

The epistle you have deigned to address to me, sir, is a beautiful justification of poetry, and highly encouraging to me. The canticles of Moses, the oracles of the pagans, every thing is there employed to elevate the excellence of
that

that art; but your own verses are the greatest eulogy that has been written on poetry. It is not very certain that Moses is the author of the two beautiful canticles; nor that the murderer of Uriah; the lover of Bathsheba, the king who was a traitor both to Philistines and Israelites, &c. wrote his psalms. But that the heir of the throne of Prussia has written very excellent French verses is indubitable. Durst I venture to prune this epistle (and this is my duty, for truth is my duty) I should tell you, sir, that *trompette* does not rhyme to *tête*, because that *tête* is long and *pette* is short; and that the rhyme is for the ear and not for the eye. *Dé-faites* for the same reason does not rhyme with *conquêtes*; *quêtes* is long and *faites* is short.

Should any one inspect my letters he would say, "Here is a very candid pedant, who talks of long and short to a prince of superabundant genius." But this prince descends to all things. When he reviews his regiment, he examines the accoutrements of the soldier. The great man neglects nothing; he gains battles when opportunity offers, and signs the happiness of his subjects with the same hand with which he turns truth into rhyme.

The ode is infinitely superior to what it was. I never shall recover from my surprise on finding

ing that French odes were so well written in the most distant parts of Germany. We have but one example of a Frenchman who wrote Italian verses well ; this was the Abbe Regnier, but he had lived long in Italy ; and your royal highness has never seen France.

The following are some few trifling errors of language. *Je n'eus point reçu l'existence* : we say, *je n'eusse*. *La sagesse avait pourvue* : we say, *pourvu*. A verb never takes that termination except when the participle is considered as an adjective. I am again becoming pedantic, but I have already asked pardon, and you are desirous of perfectly understanding a language which you so highly honour. We say, for example, *la personne que vous avez aimée* ; because *aimée* is supposed to be an adjective to *la personne*. For the same reason, we say, *la sagesse dont votre ame est pourvue* ; but we ought not to say, *Dieu a pourvu à former un prince qui, &c.*

“ *Ta clemence infinie,*

“ *Dans aucun sens me se dénie.*

Dénie cannot be used to signify *se dément*, and the word *dénier* can never be put except to mean *nier* or *refuser*.

“ *Si tu me condamne à périr.*”

It

It is absolutely necessary to say, *si tu me condamnes.*

"Tel qui n'est plus ne peut souffrir."

Tel always signifies, in this sense, a number of men, who perform a thing, in opposition to a number who do not. But this is an affair common to all men, and we must write, *Qui n'est plus ne saurait souffrir, &c.*

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Berlin, December 26th, 1737 *.

I HAVE this day been richly rewarded for the long interval during which I have received none of your letters. The post has brought me two at a time, to which I will reply according to the order of their dates.

Nothing could more surprise me than that of the 24th of October, in which you indicated the alarm which M. Thiriot so very unseason-

* Dated in the Berlin edition, January 1st, 1738.

ably incited. You may be perfectly at ease concerning all that shall be written to you, since you are by no means suspected of having had any part or knowledge, in any degree whatever, of the libel which has been published against the king.. I will in a few words inform you of the affair in question, which in reality is only a contemptible trifle, and wholly unworthy of consideration.

About a year since, a defamatory libel, attacking the person of the king, was privately sold here, under the title of *Lettre de Don Quichotte au Chevalier des Cygnes**. The lines are passable, but it is nothing but abuse turned into rhyme. The bile they contain is the most venomous possible. A succession of anecdotes, connected with all possible malignity, and embroidered in an abominable manner. The king has seen this piece, but, sensible alone to true glory, and the approbation of the good, he has treated the author and his production with sovereign contempt. Nothing more was done than to forbid the sale under severe punishment. The place at which these verses have been fabricated is not unknown; we know that the infamous author is one of those mercenary writers whom the ani-

* A Letter from Don Quixote to the Knight of the Swans,
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 mosity

most of a foreign court has incited to the commission of a crime; but it is too much beneath a king to concern himself with the punishment of such a wretch. Should Jupiter hurl his thunder on every reptile who, in his phrenzy, shall be audacious enough to blaspheme, thick clouds must eternally cover the surface of the earth, and the lightning must never cease to flash.

Can you imagine, sir, I would have been the last to have informed you of pretended injurious suspicions, conceived against yourself, had any such existed? You are but ill acquainted with me, and have but a feeble idea of my friendship! Know, sir, I have taken the care of your renown upon myself, and here hold the trumpet of fame. You understand me: that is, you very well comprehend I mean to say nothing more than that I have undertaken the defence of your reputation, against the prejudices of the ignorant, and the calumnies of the envious. I am your pledge, body for body; and employ argument, example, and your own works, to make proselytes. I may flatter myself with having been tolerably successful, though I claim no other merit than that of having really brought my countrymen acquainted with you. I intreat you, sir, hereafter to live in tranquillity,

and wait till I give you the signal before you take alarm.

I forgot to tell you that the officer whom Thiriot mentions is not of my regiment, and whose character for veracity in the army is not very high, which may further conduce to take from you all subject of apprehension.

I have received your chapter, from your metaphysics, on freedom, and am mortified to tell you that I am not entirely of your opinion. I found my system on this proposition—that we ought not voluntarily to renounce the knowledge we may acquire by reason—This being said, I use all my efforts to know every thing I possibly can know of God, in which analogy is of no small succour to me. I first perceive that a creative being must be wise and puissant. Being wise, he has in his eternal intelligence conceived the plan of the world, which, being omnipotent, he has put in execution. Hence it necessarily follows that the author of the universe must have had some end in creation. If he had an end, every accident must concur to produce that end. If all accidents concur, men must act conformably to the design of the Creator, and must only be determined in all their actions by the immutable laws of their destiny, of which, while they obey, they are ignorant.

Otherwise,

Otherwise, God would be an indolent spectator of nature; the world would be governed according to the caprice of men; and he whose omnipotence had formed the universe would have become useless, as soon as the world became peopled by feeble mortals.

We have our choice either to make a passive being of the Creator or the creature, and I immediately determine in favour of the Creator. It is more natural to suppose that God does all, and that man is the instrument of his will, than to imagine a God who creates a world, which he peoples with men that he may afterward remain inactive, and subject his will and his power to the caprice of the human mind.

I think I see an American, or some savage, who for the first time is shewn a watch: he believes that the hand which denotes the hours is free to turn of itself, and does not once suspect there are hidden springs which give it motion, much less that a watchmaker purposely made it with a precise motion to which it is subject. God is the watchmaker, and the springs of which we are composed are infinitely more minute, more ductile, and more various than those of a watch. Man is capable of many things, and as art is in us more hidden, and the moving principle is invisible, we fix our attention on

that which most strikes our senses; while he who makes all the wheels act escapes our feeble sight; yet he has not the less intended that all our actions should relate to one whole, which is the support of society, and to the good of the sum total of the human race.

When we examine objects separately, it may happen that we may conceive ideas very different from those we should conceive were we to inspect them with all their different combinations. We cannot judge of an edifice by an astragal, but when we consider the whole building we may have a clear and precise idea of its proportion and its beauties. It is the same with philosophic systems. When we take detached parts we build up a tower which has no foundation, and which consequently falls to the ground of itself. Thus, when once we avow there is a God, this God must necessarily be a part of the system, without which it would be better, for the sake of convenience, totally to erase his name; for the name of God, without the idea of his attributes, and principally without the idea of his omnipotence, his wisdom, and his prescience, is a sound without a signification, and which absolutely is destitute of meaning.

I will own, if it be necessary thus to express myself, we must collect all that is most noble,
most

most elevated, and most majestic, in order to conceive, though very imperfectly, what this Creator can be, this eternal, this omnipotent Being, &c. However, I would rather plunge into the abyfs of his immensity than renounce all knowledge of him, or such intellectual ideas of him as I am able to form.

In a word, were there no God, your system would be the only one I would adopt; but as there certainly is a God, too much cannot be attributed to this God.

After this, I have still to tell you, as all is founded on, or as the reason of all is discovered in, that which precedes, I find the reason of the temperament and the humour of each man in the mechanism of his body. The bile of a passionate man is easily moved; the hypochondres of the misanthrope inflated; the lungs of the drunkard are dry; the man addicted to women has a robust constitution, &c. &c. In fine, as I find all these things disposed in this manner in our bodies, I thence conjecture that each individual is necessarily acted upon after a precise manner, and that it does not depend upon us to be or not be of a different character. What shall I say of the accidents which conduce to give us ideas, and inspire us with motives? For example, the fineness of the weather invites me

to walk ; the recommendation of a man of good taste induces me to read a book ; and so of other things. If, therefore, I had never been informed there was a Voltaire in the world, if I had never read his excellent works, how might my will, that free agent, have determined me to grant him my whole esteem ? In a word, how can I will a thing with which I am unacquainted ? Or, to attack freedom in its last place of refuge, how can any man resolve to choose or to act, if incidents do not afford him any opportunity, and other incidents do not produce these incidents ? It cannot be chance, for chance is a word without a meaning ; it therefore can only be God. If incidents then are directed according to the will of God, he necessarily directs and governs man ; and this is the principle which is the basis and the foundation, as it were, of divine Providence ; which leads me to conceive the most noble, the highest, and the most sublime idea a creature, so bounded in his faculties as man is, can conceive, of a being so immense as is the Creator. This principle acquaints me with a God who is infinitely great and wise ; who is not absorbed (or lost) in the most extensive things (or systems)—neither is he debased by attending to the smallest circumstances.

How great must be the immensity of a God who generally embraces all things, and whose wisdom has prepared, from the origin of the universe, all which is executed, to the end of time ! Not, however, that I pretend to measure the mysteries of God by the insufficiency of human conception ; I extend my views as far as I am able ; but, should some things escape me, I do not, therefore, think proper to renounce those which my eyes very distinctly perceive.

Perhaps some prejudice, some pre-conceived opinion, or the flattering thought of pursuing some particular idea, blinds me ; perhaps I too much debase mankind. I do not deny that this may be so ; but, were the king of France to be compared to the king of Ivitot, I am certain that all men in their senses would acknowledge the power of Louis XV. to be the greatest. We have still greater reason to declare ourselves the advocates of the puissance of God, who can in no manner be brought into comparison with those fugitive beings that are produced by time, sported with by fate, and whom time destroys after a short and transitory duration.

When you speak of virtue, we perceive you are got into a country where you are acquainted.

ed. You treat the subject like a master who understands it theoretically and practically ; in a word, it is easy for you to discourse learnedly of yourself. Virtue certainly has no existence except relatively to society ; the primitive principle of virtue is self interest. Do not let this terrify you, since it is evident men would destroy each other were it not for the intervention of virtue. Nature spontaneously produces thieves, envious persons, murderers ; they are dispersed over the whole earth, and, did not the laws repress vice, each individual would abandon himself to the instinct of nature, and care only for himself. To reunite all these individual interests, it was necessary to find some medium that should satisfy them all, and it was agreed that men should not reciprocally steal from each other, that they should not attempt the lives of their fellow creatures, and that they should mutually be inclined to whatever might contribute to the general good.

There are some happy mortals, some natively just minds, who love virtue for her own sake ; their hearts are alive to the pure pleasures which are found in doing good. It is of little importance to you to know that the interest or the good of society demands you should be virtuous. The Creator has happily formed you in
such

such a manner that your heart is inaccessible to vice, and this Creator uses you as an organ, as an instrument, as a minister to render virtue more respectable, and more amiable among mankind. You have devoted your pen to virtue, and it must be acknowledged it is the greatest present which virtue ever received. The temples which the Romans dedicated to her under various titles, served to honour virtue; but while you gain converts you labour to form subjects for her, and by your life to afford an example of what is most praise-worthy in humanity.

I expect the Newtonian philosophy, and the age of Louis XIV. with which Cefario will arrive here on the 15th of January. Gout, fever, and love, have prevented my little ambassador from arriving sooner. Any one of these evils is quite sufficient most terribly to derange the freedom of our will.

I shall not fail to speak my sentiments, with all possible frankness, concerning the works which you have had the goodness to send me; it will be the most manifest mark I am able to afford you of my esteem. If I state my doubts it is not in the spirit of arrogance; neither is it that I have a high opinion of my own talents; but it is for the discovery of truth. My
doubts

doubts are but questions, that I may gain more perfect instruction, and avoid all the impediments which are met with in a path so thorny as that of metaphysics. These are the reasons which oblige me never to disguise my sentiments from you. It were to be wished that all intercourse might be the traffic of truth; but how many men can be found capable of listening to truth? An unfortunate degree of presumption, a pernicious idea of infallibility, a fatal habit of seeing all bend in their presence, places truth at a distance. They can only suffer the echo of their own thoughts, and they carry tyranny so far as to wish to govern thoughts and opinions with as much despotism as the Russians would govern a servile troop of slaves. Virtue alone is worthy of hearing truth; since the world is in love with error, and wishes to be deceived, it must be abandoned to its evil destiny; and, in my opinion, the most flattering homage we can pay to any person is to discover freely our thoughts, without fear of offence: in a word, to dare to contradict an author is to render tacit homage to his moderation, his justice, and his reason.

You have inspired me with the most charming hopes; it is not sufficient that you should instruct me in subjects the most profound, but
you

you think also of my recreation. What is it that I do not owe you ! Heaven certainly sent me a man of your merit for my happiness: you singly are worth thousands.

You have at present received a sufficient quantity of my verses, which I sent off for Cirey at the end of November. I am passionately fond of poetry, but I have too many obstacles to surmount to write any thing passable. I write in a foreign language, I want warmth of imagination, and all the good things had been said before I became an author. I resemble vines, which always partake of the quality of the ground in which they are planted. It should seem that Remusberg is tolerably proper for rhyme, but that this place, at most, can only produce prose. Have the goodness to assure the incomparable Emily of my whole esteem. She has disarmed my anger by the extract from your metaphysics which I have just received. I will freely confess I had some regret to discover the least trifle in her which can approach imperfection: at present she is such as I desire her to be.

Although I do not discover the word Cirey among my hereditary titles, I nevertheless feel you were formed to instruct, as I was to admire you. To repeat any assurances of my esteem
would

would be superfluous. Of this I flatter myself you are convinced, as well as of all the sentiments with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXXIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

January 23d, 1738.

I HAVE received a letter from Berlin, dated December 26th, which contains two principal articles; the one full of goodness, tenderness, and attention, enough to overwhelm me with the most flattering benefits; and the second a very forcibly written essay on metaphysics. We should have supposed the letter had been sent by Leibnitz, or Wolf, to some one of their friends, but it is signed Frederic. This is one of the prodigies you, sir, enact. Your royal highness perfectly fills your character; you clear me from the aspersions of calumny, you protect my honour against the shafts of envy, and send the food of intelligence for my mind.

I am, therefore, proceeding in metaphysical midnight to combat against Leibnitz, Wolf, and Frederic.

Frederic. Behold me, like Ajax, fighting in the dark, and hear me exclaim, Great Jove ! afford us but light, and be thou our opponent*.

But, before I enter the lists, I will transcribe two epistles to put in the packet, which are the commencement of a kind of moral system I began about a year ago. Four epistles are written ; these are the two first ; the subject of the one is the equality of mankind, the other is on freedom. It is impertinent enough in me, an atom of Cirey, to say, to a head over which a crown is suspended, that men are equal, and to send satirical rhymes against the partisans of fatality, to a philosopher who lends support so powerful to the system of necessity.

But these two rash acts of mine prove the goodness of your royal highness. You lay no constraint on the conscience : you permit us to dispute with you. Thus the angel wrestled with Jacob. I shall remain lame, but no matter ; I wish to acquire the honour of having fought.

* The words of Homer are

——— δὲ δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδεῖσθαι
 Εἰ δὲ φάει καὶ ὀλέσσει ἐπὶ τὸ τοι εὐαδὲν ἔτιω.

Literally—Give us but light and destroy us, since such is thy will. T.

As

As to the equality of mankind, I believe it as firmly as I believe that a mind like yours would every where be equal. Your motto is

Nave ferar magna, an parva ferar, unus et idem.

With respect to freedom, the subject is a kind of chaos. Let us see whether Clarke, Locke, and Newton ought to be my instructors; or whether Leibnitz, though in the character of a prince, should afford me information. Nothing certainly can, be more strong than what your royal highness has said in proof of necessity. I immediately perceive you entertain the same opinion as Leibnitz and Wolf, on *the adequate cause*. It is a fine idea, that is to say a true one; for, in fine, there is nothing without a cause, nothing which has not a reason for its existence. But does that idea exclude the freedom of man?

I. What do I understand by freedom?—The power of thinking and of acting, in consequence of a power which is very bounded, as all my faculties are.

II. Is it I who think, and who consequently act, or is it another who thinks and acts for me? If it be myself, I am free; for to be free is to act. Whatever is passive is not free.—Is it another who

who acts for me? I am deceived by that other, when I suppose myself to be the agent.

III. Who, what, is that other who deceives me? Either there is or there is not a God. If there be a God, it is he who deceives me, continually; that infinitely wise, infinitely consistent Being, who, without adequate cause, is eternally occupied in errors directly opposite to his essence, which is truth.

If there be no God, what is it then which deceives me? Is it matter, which, of itself, is destitute of intelligence?

IV. To prove to ourselves, in despite of this interior conviction, of this testimony which we render ourselves of our freedom, I say to prove to ourselves that no such freedom exists, we must first necessarily prove it to be impossible. This appears to me incontestable. Let us examine how it would be impossible.

V. Freedom could only be impossible after two ways; either because there is no being that can bestow it, or because it is in itself a contradiction in terms, like as a long square is a contradiction. But the idea of the freedom of man contains nothing in itself that is contradictory. We are, therefore, to enquire whether the infinite Being, the Creator, be free; and, if he be, whether he were able to impart a small por-

tion of this attribute to man, like as he has imparted a small portion of his intelligence.

VI. If God be not free, he is not an agent; consequently he is not God. If he be free and omnipotent, it follows that he was able to impart freedom to man. We have, therefore, to enquire what reason there is to believe he has not imparted this gift.

VII. It is pretended that God has not given us freedom, because, if we were agents, we should then be independent of himself. And what, it is asked, would God do when we should act from ourselves? To this I give two answers: 1. That God does when men act that which he did before men had being, and that which he shall do when they are no more. 2. That his power is not the less necessary for the preservation of his works, and that the communication which he has made to us of a small portion of freedom is no deduction from his infinite power, since it is itself an effect of his infinite power.

VIII. It is objected that we are hurried away sometimes in despite of ourselves; and I answer, then we are sometimes masters of ourselves. Illness proves health, and freedom is the health of the soul.

IX. The assent of the understanding, it is added, is necessary, and the will follows the assent;

sent ; therefore, man wills and acts from necessity. I reply that we really wish from necessity ; but to wish and to will are two very different things ; and so different that a wise man often wills and does that which he does not wish. To combat our wish is the most exalted effect of freedom, and I imagine that one of the great sources of misunderstanding among men, on this subject, originates in often confounding the wish and the will.

X. But, were we free, say those who object, there would be no God. I believe, on the contrary, that it is because there is a God that we are free ; for, were it all necessity, did this world exist of itself, from absolute necessity (which abounds in contradictions) it is certain that every thing would then be performed by motions which would necessarily be connected : there would then be no freedom. Hence, no God no freedom. I am much surprised to observe the reasons on this subject which have escaped the illustrious Leibnitz.

XI. The most formidable argument that has ever been brought, against our freedom, is the impossibility of making it accord with the prescience of God ; and when I am told God knows that which you shall do twenty years hence, therefore, what you shall do twenty years hence

is absolute necessity, I confess, I am at a stand, that I have nothing to answer, and that all philosophers who have endeavoured to reconcile future contingencies with the prescience of God have been very bad negociators. There are some who have effrontery enough to say that God may very well be ignorant of future contingencies; nearly, if I may be permitted the comparison, as a king may be ignorant of the future acts of his general, to whom he has given full powers.

These people go still further; they maintain that it would not only be no imperfection in a Supreme Being to be ignorant of what creatures should freely do, whom he has created free, but that, on the contrary, it seems most worthy of the Supreme Being to create beings similar to himself; similar, I say, in that they think, will, and act; instead of creating mere machines.

They add that God cannot be guilty of contradiction; and perhaps there would be a contradiction in foreseeing what his creatures must do, yet, at the same time, communicating to them the power of doing or forbearing; for, say they, freedom consists in the power of acting or forbearing to act; therefore, did God precisely know which of the two would happen,
the

the opposite would be impossible, and there would be no freedom. Thus these people admit freedom and deny prescience, which to admit would, according to them, imply a contradiction in terms.

In fine, they affirm that God must be ignorant of that of which it is his nature to be ignorant; and they are daring enough to say that it is his nature to be ignorant of all future contingencies, and that he cannot know that which is not.

Might it not very well be, say they, that, from the same store of wisdom which makes God foresee, eternally foresee, things necessary, he should be ignorant of things free? Would he be less the creator of all things, of free agents, and of beings purely passive?

Who has told us, continue they, that it would not be a sufficiently great satisfaction for God to see how so many free beings, whom he has created in so many worlds, freely act? This pleasure, continually new, of observing how his creatures every moment employ the instruments he has bestowed, might well be equal to that eternal and indolent contemplation of himself, which is incompatible with the external occupations that are attributed to him.

It is objected to these reasoners that God in

an instant sees the past, the present, and the future; that eternity is to him momentaneous: but they reply they do not understand this language; and that an eternity, which is but a moment, appears to them as absurd as an immensity, which is but a point.

Might we not say, without being equally bold, that God foresees our free actions, nearly in the same manner as a wife man foresees the part he shall act on such an occasion, and with a man with whose character he is acquainted? The difference would be that the man would foresee erroneously, and that God would foresee with infinite sagacity. This is the opinion of Clarke.

I own all this appears to me very doubtful, and that it is a confession rather than a solution of the difficulty. In fine, sir, I own that very excellent objections are made against freedom, but equally good are made against the existence of God; and as, in despite of the extreme difficulties raised against a creating providence, I still believe in creation and providence, so do I believe myself free (that is to say to a certain point) in despite of the powerful objections which you make.

I therefore write to your royal highness, not as to an automaton created to be at the head of
some

some millions of human puppets, but as a being among the most free, and the wisest, God has ever deigned to form.

Indulge me, sir, in a reflection. Among twenty men, nineteen will be found who do not govern themselves by principle, but your soul appears to be of the smaller number, full of fortitude and grandeur, and which acts as it thinks.

In the name of humanity, condescend to believe that we have some freedom; for, should you imagine we are pure machines, what will become of the friendship in which you delight? What will be the value of the great actions you shall perform? What must be the gratitude due to your royal highness, for endeavouring to render mankind better and more happy? In fine, how must you regard the attachment of others to yourself, the services that may be rendered you, or the blood that may be shed in your behalf? And shall the most generous, the most tender, the wisest of men, contemplate all that is done to give him pleasure with the same indifference as he would the wheels of a water-mill, that keep turning, and are worn and broken to pieces by their useful labours? No, sir, your soul is too noble thus to deprive itself of the most splendid part of its inheritance.

Pardon these arguments, this morality, and this babbling. I do not say I have not been free while speaking thus ; no, I imagine I have written with great freedom, and it is this freedom for which I ask pardon.

The marchionets du Chatelet fails not to join me in respect and admiration.

My last letter was that of a pedantic grammarian, and this of a bad metaphysician. But that, and this, and all others will be from a man eternally attached to your royal highness.

I am, &c,

L E T T E R XL.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Potsdam, January 19, 1738 *.

I HOPE you have by this time received the memoirs on the government of the czar Peter and the verses which I sent you. They were committed to the care of a captain in my regiment, of the name of Plœtz, who is at Lunewille, and who apparently could not remit them

* January the 26th in the Berlin edition,

to you sooner, either from the absence of some officers, or for want of finding a good opportunity.

I am convinced I risk nothing in confiding secret and curious memoirs to you; your discretion and prudence deprive me of all the fears I might otherwise entertain. My reason for remarking to you what use ought to be made of these memoirs, on the Muscovites, was only to let you understand the necessity there is to employ some management in treating on subjects of such delicacy. Most princes have a singular passion for genealogies; this is a kind of self-love, which extends back to their remotest predecessors, and which interests them in the renown, not only of their ancestors in a right line, but likewise for their collaterals. To venture to tell them that some among their predecessors have been men of little virtue, and consequently very contemptible, is to commit an injury which they will never pardon; and woe to the profane author who has had the temerity to enter the sanctuary of their history, and to divulge the shame of their house,

If this delicacy did but extend to the reputation of their female predecessors, tolerable reasons might indeed be given for a zeal so ardent; but to pretend that fifty or sixty of our progenitors have all been the most worthy men

possible is to confine virtue to a single family, and to be guilty of injustice to the whole human race.

I one day was thoughtless enough to say, in the presence of a certain person, that such another person was guilty of an action unworthy of a gentleman. Unfortunately for me, it happened that the person of whom I had so freely spoken was a sort of cousin to the other; and he took up the affair very seriously. I asked the reason of his behaviour, was informed, and was obliged to subject myself to a long genealogical detail, to examine in what my mistake consisted. I had no other resource than that of sacrificing all those, among my relations, who did not merit to be among them, to the anger of the person offended. I was loudly blamed, but I justified myself by saying that every man of honour, every worthy man, was my relation, and that I knew no other.

If a private person can be so grievously offended by ill spoken of his kindred, what may be the anger of a sovereign to whom ill should be spoken of one of her progenitors*, who in her opinion was a respectable character, and from whom she derives all her grandeur?

I feel myself very little capable of censuring

* The Berlin edition reads—*une souveraine*—in the feminine; consequently refers to Anne Petrowna, at that time empress of Russia.

your works; you stamp them with the character of immortality, to which nothing can be added; and, notwithstanding the desire I have to be of service to you, I perceive I never can do you the good office which was performed by the old woman of Moliere, when he read his comedies to her. I have told you my opinion concerning the tragedy of Merope, which, according to the little knowledge I have of the theatre and the rules of the dramatic art, appears to me the most regular piece you have ever written.

I am persuaded it will do more honour to you than Alzira, and I intreat you would be kind enough to send me the correction of those errors of the transcriber which I pointed out to you.

I shall try the route of Treves, according to your request, and I hope you will take care that my letters shall be sent you from Treves to Cirey, and to inform the post-master of the attention it is necessary he should pay to this correspondence. You give me to understand it would not be disagreeable to you to receive some musical composition of mine: be so good as to inform me what number of performers you have, that, by knowing this, and the instruments they play, I may send you pieces properly adapted. I will send you *le Couvreur*, set as a cantata.

Que vois-je ! Quel objet ! Quoi ! ces lèvres charmantes, &c.

But I fear to awaken in you the recollection of happiness which is past ; we rather ought to detach the mind from gloomy subjects. Our life is too short to abandon ourselves to chagrin ; we scarcely have time to make merry, I shall, therefore, only send you cheerful music.

The imprudent Thiriot has trumpeted to the four quarters of the world that I have addressed an epistle in verse to madame de la Pôpeliinière. Had these verses been passable my vanity would not have failed to have teased you with them immediately, but, the truth is, they are very indifferent ; and, for this reason, I repent of having shewn them.

I should be very glad to live in a temperate climate. I very much wish to merit and to possess friends like yourself, and to be esteemed by worthy people. I would willingly renounce that which forms the principal object of the cupidity and ambition of men ; but I feel that were I not a prince I should be very insignificant. Your merit is sufficient to make you esteemed and envied, and to gain admiration ; for my part, titles, heraldry, and revenues are necessary for me to attract the attention of mankind. Ah ! my dear friend, how much reason have you to be satisfied with your destiny ! A
great

great prince, being on the point of falling into the hands of his enemies, while his courtiers were in tears and despairing around him, uttered these few words, which include much meaning: "I feel, by your tears, I am yet a king."

How much is my gratitude indebted to you for all the trouble I give you. You continually instruct me, yet are not weary of instructing. I should, in reality, sir, be very ungrateful did I not feel all you do for me; at present I apply myself to put all those rules in practice you have given me, and I intreat you would not be weary of correction.

I have more than once asked myself how it should happen that the French, who are so fond of novelty, should at present revive the antique language of Marot. The French tongue certainly was not at that time nearly so much polished as it is at present. What pleasure can the chaste ear find in sounds so rude as the following old words afford, *oncques, preux, la machine publique, accoutremens, &c. &c.*?

Should any person in Paris appear in the dress of the age of Henry IV. it would be thought very strange, though that dress might be equally convenient with the modern. How does it happen, pray, that the French wish to speak and to revive a language the contemporary of
fashions

fashions which they will no longer endure? What renders it more extraordinary is that language is but little understood, at present, while the language of the present day is much more correct, and much better; is susceptible of all the simplicity of that of Marot, and is possessed of beauties to which the other never durst pretend. These, in my opinion, are the effects of ill taste, and the freaks of caprice. It must be confessed there is something very strange in the human mind.

I am now about to return to the place of my residence, to devote myself to study, and again resort to philosophy, history, poetry, and music. I own to you I am in fear of the mathematics; they render the imagination dry, and that is a defect to which we Germans are already too subject; ours is an ungrateful soil, which must be tilled and watered incessantly, if we would render it productive.

Assure the marchioness du Chatelet of my whole esteem, and tell Emily I entertain all possible admiration for her. With respect to yourself, sir, you must rest persuaded of the perfect esteem I entertain for you. I once more repeat I shall continue this esteem for you as long as I live, and that with those sentiments of admiration with which you so well know how
to

to inspire all those who are acquainted with you, I remain,

SIR,

Your very faithful affectionate friend.

L E T T E R XLI.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

January, 1738.

I HAVE received the most agreeable new-year's gifts that ever were accepted; two large packets from your royal highness have arrived both at once, the one by favour of M. Thiriot, and the other by that of M. Pløtz, a captain in your regiment, who addressed his packet to me from Luneville. By favour of the same M. Pløtz, I have the honour to return an answer to your royal highness, on the very day, or rather, the very night I received your letter; for I passed a great part of the night in reading your verses, which these two packets contained, and the very instructive prose concerning Russia.

Be assured, sir, your poetry has done this prose great injury, and that we love better to read

read four rhymes signed *Frederic*, than every event the empire of the Russians, or universal history itself, could afford. It is not because these verses praise Emily and me, nor is it because French verses have had the honour to be written by an heir to a kingdom of Germany; it is truly because they are very charming, exceedingly well written, and in the best possible taste. The marchioness du Chatelet, who hitherto has only been a philosopher, intends to become a poet, that she may answer you.

For my own part, sir, I have so many of your presents that I know not which to speak of first. We were only able to read the whole very rapidly, but, at the first glance, we gave the preference to the little piece in lines of eight syllables, in which you have drawn a parallel between the retired and free life you now live, with that which you must one day unfortunately lead.

Tell me whether my conjecture be true; I am persuaded that these verses cost you less in the writing than the others. They breathe the facility, the ease, the grace of genius. It further appears to me that of all styles this perhaps is most suitable to a prince like you, because it abounds with that freedom and those charms with which you inspire the societies you honour
with

with your presence. This style does not partake of the labour of a man too much occupied by poetry. Your other works have their value. I shall have the honour to mention them in my first letter, but this shall be the saint of the day. There are but very few errors which have escaped from the vivacity of the royal author, and these are rather the errors of the hand than of the understanding. For example.

*J'aufe profiter de la vie,
Sans craindre les tres de l'envie.*

In your haste you have written *j'aufe* for *j'ose*, *tres* for *traits*, *matein* for *matin*, &c. You suppose *amitié* to be four syllables, and it is but three; *carrière* in like manner you imagine three syllables, and it is but two. These are such observations as the door-keeper of the French academy might send; but the reason is, sir, that I have few others to make. I do but set your shoe buckle strait, while the Graces present and adjust your robes.

The reason I have thus far preferred this work is that it is an unadorned picture of your present life. I seem to be one of the courtiers of your royal highness, to have the happiness of hearing you, and to repeat my doubts on those sciences you study. Cirey is beside the picture

of Remusberg in miniature; my heroine lives like my hero. I should say something concerning the epistle which your royal highness has addressed to her, but I should do you both wrong were I not to let her answer for herself.

Worthy alike to listen or to speak,
'Tis hers alone to answer all you write.
To such an Alexander's noble theme
Such a Thalestris only can reply.

How many thanks have I to return your royal highness for the letter from M. Duhan to M. Pene! I scarcely dare mention the verses you have deigned to address to me. How high is my reward, and how great is my encouragement to merit if possible your bounties! Be kind enough to suffer me to recollect myself; my brain is intoxicated. I will talk of all these things when I am sufficiently cool.

In order to sober myself, I will come immediately to the prose, and the particulars concerning Russia, which you have been kind enough to send me, and for the arrival of which I was extremely anxious.

They seem to have been written by a man well acquainted with facts and the country. I am not astonished to perceive those contrasts in the czar Peter I. which dishonour his great qualities,

qualities, and all that I am able to say in excuse for the monarch is that he himself was sensible of them. A burgomaster of Amsterdam one day praised him for his desire to reform his nation. It will cost me much trouble, replied the czar; but I have a work still more difficult to perform. What is that? said the Dutchman. To reform myself, answered the czar. I allow, sir, he was a barbarian; still he was a barbarian who created a new race; a barbarian who quitted empire that he might learn to reign; a barbarian who wrestled against education and nature; he founded cities, he cut canals from sea to sea, he taught a people to be mariners who had no ideas of such an art, and he endeavoured even to make the unsociable live in society.

That he had great defects cannot be doubted, but were they not veiled by that creative spirit which made him imagine such a multitude of projects, all for the grandeur of his country, and many of which have been executed? Did he not establish the arts? In fine, did he not diminish the number of monks? Your royal highness has good reason to detest his vices and his ferocity. In Alexander, of whom you speak, you hate the murderer of Clytus; but do you not admire the avenger of Greece, the vanquisher

of Darius, and the founder of Alexandria? Do you not recollect that he chastised the insolent pride of the Persians, that he built cities which became the centre of the commerce of the world, that he loved the arts, and that he was the most generous of men.

The czar, you say, sir, had not the valour of Charles XII. which is true; still this czar, though born with little valour, fought battles, beheld men killed on every side of him, and personally conquered the bravest man on earth. I love a coward who gains victories.

I will not dissemble his faults, but I will bestow all possible praise, not only on all the great acts he performed but on those he wished to perform. I wish all the histories which only retrace the vices and the phrenzies of kings were sunk in the sea. Of what use are these registers of crimes and horrors? What but sometimes to encourage a feeble prince in excesses of which he would be ashamed, if he were not incited by example. Will a pope long hesitate to commit fraud, and administer poison, when he reads that Alexander VI. maintained himself by deceit, and by poisoning his enemies?

Would to heaven that we only were acquainted with kings from the good they have done! The world

world would be happily deceived, and no sovereign would dare perhaps to set an example of malignity or tyranny.

I shall probably be obliged to speak of the empress Martha, afterward named Catharine, and of the unfortunate son of this ferocious legislator. May I venture to intreat your royal highness to procure me some intelligence concerning the life of that singular woman, and the manners and the kind of death of the czarowitz. I much fear that death will tarnish the glory of the czar. I know not whether nature rid a great man of a son who was unable to imitate him, or whether the father sullied his reign by a horrible crime.

Infelix, utcumque ferent ea fata nepotes!

Will your royal highness have the goodness to add these particulars to those with which you have already honoured me? You were born to protect and instruct me, &c.

L E T T E R XLII.

From M. de Voltaire.

February 5, 1738.

THE ring, fir, you sent, which is wrought with such art,
 Though bright to the eye, is more dear to the heart.
 Charlemagne and Angelica each had a ring,
 The virtues of which poets rapturously sing;
 Yet yours is so precious, I boldly aver,
 I none but the ring of Hans-Carvel prefer.

Your royal highness greatly embarrasses me by your goodness, for I shall soon have another tragedy to send you; and, however great an honour it may be to receive the presents you send, I should rather wish this new tragedy might serve, if so it could, to pay for the present ring than appear to solicit another.

Pardon my poetic insolence, fir. But how can you expect my mind should not be somewhat inflated? You grant me your suffrage, which is the most flattering recompense I can receive, and I am so well satisfied with this reward that I do not seem to wish to derive any other from my Merope. Your royal highness to me shall stand in lieu of the public: I think it enough that
 your

your masculine mind, worthy of your rank, has approved a French tragedy without love. I will not do our pit and boxes the honour to present them with a work which so strongly condemns the sophisticated and effeminate taste which has prevailed among us. I dare believe, according to the opinion of your royal highness, that any man, not spoiled by listening to those amorous elegies which we name tragedies, will be affected by the maternal love which predominates through Merope. But our French are unfortunately so gallant, and so handsome, that all authors who have treated such subjects have always embellished them by some amorous intrigue, between a young princess and a very amiable cavalier. We find they have cut for partners in the *Electra* of Crébillon; a tragedy in other respects of great pathos. The *Amasis* of La Grange, which is the subject of Merope, is interlarded with an amour exceedingly well managed. This in fine is our general taste, and to this Corneille always subjected himself. When Cæsar comes to Egypt, it is to behold

—————une reine adorable! *

And Anthony answers him—

* An adorable queen.

S 4

Oui.

Oui, seigneur! Je l'ai vue; elle est incomparable! *

Old Marcian, the wrinkled Sertorius, holy Paulina, and the prostituted St. Théodore, are all amorous.

Not that love is a passion unworthy the stage; but it must be tragic love; passionate, furious, cruel, and criminal; nay, if you please, horrible; but not gallant.

Let me intreat your royal highness to read the *Merope* of the marquis Mafféi, written in Italian, and you will perceive, however different it may be from mine, I have at least the good fortune to agree with him in the simplicity of my subject, and in the attention which I have paid not to lessen the interest of the piece by the introducing of any intrigue foreign to the plot. To employ your leisure in judging the works of all countries, is an occupation worthy of a genius like yours. This is the true universal monarchy, and far more certain than that to which the houses of Austria and Bourbon have aspired.

I know not yet whether your royal highness has received my packet, and the letter of the marchioness du Chatelet, sent by favour of M. Plœtz. I bid you adieu, sir, that I may imme-

* Yes, sir; I have seen her; she is incomparable.

diately

diately apply myself to the new work with which, in a few weeks, I hope to amuse the Trajan and the Mæcenas of the North.

I am with the most profound respect and the tenderest gratitude &c.

L E T T E R XLIII.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Remusberg, February 4, 1738.*

I AM much vexed that you were so long before you received the history of the czar, and my good for nothing verses. You will dream better lines than I can write waking, and, should any that are passable be found in the crowd, it will only be because they have been stolen from, or written in imitation of, yours. I labour like the sculptor who, when he made the Venus de Medicis, formed the features of her face and the proportions of her body after the most beautiful persons of his age. It was mosaic work; but if these ladies had demanded, the one her eyes, the other her neck, and a third the form of her countenance, what of the poor Venus would have remained

* Undated in the Berlin copy.

remained to the statuary? I own the parallel between my life and that of the court cost me little; but you praise it more than it deserves. It is rather a narrative of my occupations than a poetical composition, embellished with proper imagery. I thought not to have sent it you, so very negligent did I think the style.

I wait with impatience for the verses which Emily means to take the trouble to write. I am certain to gain by the traffic, and were I a Cartesian I should be highly vain of being the occasional cause of good productions from the marchioness.

It is said that when presents are made to princes they are returned a hundred fold, but here it is the very reverse. I send you debased coin, and you return me inestimable merchandize. How fortunate it is to have a mind resembling yours (or that of Emily) which like a river overflows and fertilizes the country wherever its waters spread! It would not be difficult here for me to enumerate the many occasions you have taken to excite my gratitude, though I should have an infinity of things to say of the Mundane, of his defence, of the ode to Emily, of other pieces, and of the incomparable Merope. These are presents which you are the only man in the world capable of making.

You and Apollo Merope restore,
With beauties such as make mankind adore ;
A perfect model of the true sublime,
And draw down Envy's curse in prose and rhyme.

You cannot imagine how much my self-love
is humbled by your verses ; there is no with-
standing them.

Like Age in the fable, I call'd out for aid—
Not to Death, for, of him and his bare bones afraid,
Were he here, I've no doubt I should wish he were hence—
I call'd my Familiar, in hopes he'd dispense
His favours poetic, and bid the verse flow,
The fancy all sportive, the heart in a glow,
As freely as e'er with Anacreon, of old,
Or Catullus, whose tales are so charmingly told !
I call'd and most modestly ask'd, for this time,
If he could not give reason, at least he'd give rhyme.
The kind-hearted sprite lent an affable ear,
And in Love, or in Dove, was about to appear,
When in came the Graces—(the Loves and the Smiles
Flutter'd after, with all their ineffable wiles)
They led a young beauty, of aspect divine,
Whom you and Apollo had deign'd to consign
To their care : I heard pleas'd Melpomene call
The virgin her child !—'Twas the child of ye all !
'Twas Merope ! Who more sententious and sage is
Than he who the wisest was deem'd of wise ages ;
Than Tully more eloquent ; she who, in truth,
Soon taught me to blush at the crimes of my youth ;
Soon taught me to pity, and spurn from my sight,
The poor paltry jargon and rhymes which I write !

Enraged

Enraged at the farce I so often rehearse,
Despising my prose, and detesting my verse,
I dismiss'd my Familiar, in language uncivil,
And bade the dull Demon pack off to the Devil.
Yet, if to old Tophet the poor Goblin gone is,
Heav'n shield me, say I, from the Lex-talionis !

I am like the Spaniards settled in Mexico, who are very singularly vain of the beauty of their brown skins and olive colour. What would they say were they to behold an European beauty, whose complexion displays the finest tints, whose skin is like a transparent varnish, which is laid over the picture, yet suffers the most minute strokes of the pencil to be seen ! Their pride, I imagine, would be entirely routed ; and, if I am not very much deceived, a Narcissus so ridiculous would break his looking glass with vexation and anger.

You seem to be satisfied with the memoirs of the czar Peter I. which I sent you, and I am highly so that I have been able to be of any use to you. I will make all necessary inquiry to obtain the particulars of the adventures of the czarina, and of the life of the czarowitz, which you request. You will not be satisfied with the manner in which this prince ended his days, when you learn that it was by the ferocity and cruelty of his father.

Were

Were we to take the trouble cool'y to examine the good and the evil which the czar effected in his country, were we to weigh his excellent and his ill qualities in the balance, and to examine which would preponderate, we should perhaps find that this monarch performed many brilliant bad actions, that he possessed heroic vices, and that his virtues were darkened and eclipsed by these vices, which were innumerable. If I do not mistake, humanity should be the first quality of a reasonable man. If he make this a principle, in despite of his defects, good must be the consequence. But if, on the contrary, a man has none but barbarous and inhuman sentiments, it may very well happen, that he may do some good, but his life will ever be fulfilled by crimes.

True it is that history is, in part, the annals of the malignity of mankind ; but, with the poison, it also presents the antidote. We find in history examples of an infinite number of wicked princes, tyrants, and monsters ; but, we see them hated by their people, detested by their neighbours, and held in abomination by the whole world : their very names become opprobrious, and it is injurious to the fame of the living to be called after one of these dead. Few men are insensible to fame ; however wicked they

they may be, they do not wish to be thought so; they would all be cited as examples of virtue, probity, and heroism. With dispositions like these, I believe the reading of history, and the proofs it affords of the ill fame of those monsters whom nature has brought forth, cannot fail of producing an advantageous effect on the minds of those monarchs who shall read; for, while they regard vices as actions which degrade and tarnish fame, the pleasure of doing good will appear so pure that to remain insensible of it will be impossible. An ambitious man will not search history for an example of ambition that was detested; and whoever shall read the tragical end of Cæsar, will be taught to dread the consequences of tyranny.

Men endeavour to conceal the wickedness and depravity of the heart as much as they can; they act independent of example, and have no other end but that of assuaging their ungovernable passions. Beside, if a rascal wish to authorize his crimes by example, he has no need (be this said to the honour of our age) to go back to the beginning of the world; the corrupted human race daily presents such as are recent, and which, therefore, have the greater force. In fine, it is only necessary to be man, to be able to judge of the wickedness of men, in all ages.

ages. That you should not have made such reflections is not astonishing.

In virtuous deeds thy soul delighting, knows
No good but that which Virtue's self bestows;
No other art hast thou save that which binds
Th' impetuous passions of tyrannic minds;
Tranquil from heav'nly wisdom thou look'st down
On human vice, as on a thing unknown!

Cesario and the age of Louis the Great are not yet arrived, to allay my longing impatience; an embargo is laid on them by the gout. I grant we cannot enjoy all we wish in this life, though I hope my suspicions will not continue long, and that this Jason will soon make me the possessor of the golden fleece, so much desired and so long expected. I promise you all possible sincerity and frankness, in judging your works. My doubts are a kind of questions, which, from the justice you owe your works, will oblige you to instruct me.

I beg you to assure the incomparable Emily of the great esteem I feel for her. But I perceive I conclude my letters by salutations to the sisters, like faint Paul, though I am well persuaded that there was not, either in the Old or New Testament, a Jewess of Idumæa who equalled in worth the hundredth part of Emily.

As

As to the esteem, friendship, and consideration I have for you, they will never end being, &c.

L E T T E R XLIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR

February, 1738.

A DISORDER which has made the tour of France has at last come and seized on my weakly frame, in a castle which ought to be a shelter from all the plagues of the earth, since its inhabitants live under the auspices *Divi Frederici et Divæ Emilie*. I was in bed when I received two letters at a time from your royal highness, which gave me great consolation; the one by favour of M. Thiriot, on whom your royal highness has very justly bestowed the epithet of trumpet, but who also is one of the trumpets of your renown; the other has travelled immediately according to its destination.

All those with which, sir, you have honoured me, have been so many benefits bestowed, but the last has given me the most pleasure; and,

not

not merely because it is the last, but because you have judged the defects of Merope as if the life of your royal highness had been passed in frequenting our theatres. I and the sublime Emily were speaking on the subject, and were asking whether the fear which Polifonte indicates in the fourth act, and the languor of the good old Narbas, with his desire of self preservation, in the fifth, might not probably displease your royal highness. The postman and the letters arrived, your criticism came, and we were enchanted ! Ill as I was, what, sir, do you imagine I immediately did ? You may easily guess, I corrected these fourth and fifth acts.

I was a little too much in haste to send it you, sir. The desire of presenting my first fruits *Divo-Frederico* did not permit me to wait till they were ripe ; I therefore intreat you to consider them as premature. They are at present almost fit to gather. I have made various alterations at the end of the second, the end of the third, and the beginning and end of the fourth act, and have re-written almost half of the fifth. If your royal highness will permit me, I will either send you a copy of the four acts corrected, or only the altered passages.

I believe M. Thiriot will soon send your royal highness a new tragedy, which gives infinite

satisfaction at Paris. It is written by a man of nearly my own age, named la Chauffée, who began to compose for the theatre rather late in life, as if he were determined to wait till his genius had acquired its full force. He has already written a comedy highly esteemed, entitled *le Préjugé à la mode*, and an epistle to Clio, three parts of which are perfect in their kind. I hope much from his tragedy of Maximien; it will be an additional amusement for Remusberg; it will be read and approved by your royal highness, and I cannot wish it to be more fortunate.

You, sir, are our judge. We are like the people of Elis, who did not think they had appointed honourable games unless they were approved in Egypt.

Your royal highness makes me shudder, while speaking of what I suspected of the czar. That man was unworthy to build cities; a tyger, who was the legislator of wolves.

Your royal highness has deigned to promise me the cantata of *le Couvreur*; let me intreat you to honour Cirey with this present; it is right that our pleasures should in part come from Remusberg. I shall be in paradise when I listen to my verses, embellished by your music, and sung by Emily.

I wish

I wish all our trifling rhymers were to read what your royal highness has written to me on the style of Marot, and how ridiculous it is to express those things, by obsolete words, which do not deserve to be expressed in any language. Gresset does not fall into this error; his style is pure; some of his verses are happy and easy; he only wants strength, a little variety, and particularly to be more concise; for he usually says that in ten lines which ought to be expressed in two; but your superior understanding feels better than I can explain such things.

I imagine that the baron von Kayserling is at length returned to his polar star, and that Louis XIV. and Newton have had sentence passed. I wait the arrival of that sentence to continue or to suspend the history of the age of Louis XIV.

I am, with profound respect, and the most tender gratitude, *pariter cum Emilia, &c.*

L E T T E R XLV.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Remusberg, February 17th, 1738 *

I HAVE just received your letter of the 23d of January. It serves as an answer, or rather as a refutation to that of the 26th of December, which I wrote to you. I greatly repent having too lightly, and perhaps inconsiderately, engaged in a metaphysical discussion with an adversary who will beat me out of the field; but it is no longer time to retreat, after having proceeded thus far.

This occasion brings to my remembrance a dispute at which I was present, concerning the superiority of the French or the Italian music. The person who maintained the part of the French began most miserably to sing an Italian air, affirming that it was the most abominable thing he had ever heard, in which assertion nobody contradicted him; he then desired a person who sung exceedingly well, and who ac-

* February 20th in the Berlin edition.

quitted

quitted himself miraculously, to pay all honour due to Lulli. Had the music of the two nations been to be judged by these specimens, every body must certainly have condemned the Italian; and yet, in my opinion, every body would have been wrong. Are not metaphysics, when handled by me, what an Italian air was sung by this gentleman, who was not very learned? Be it as it may, I have your glory too much at heart to allow you have gained a victory without resistance; you shall have the honour of having vanquished an intrepid foe, who will employ every defence in his power, and expend his whole magazine of arguments before he will beat a retreat.

I perceive that the different manner in which we dispute does but increase our distance in the systems which we support. You argue *à posteriori*; and I *à priori*; therefore, that we may proceed with more order, and avoid confusion, in the profound darkness of metaphysics which we are to dispel, I believe it will be best to begin by establishing a fixed principle: this will serve as a pole toward which our needle will always point; it shall be the centre in which all the lines of my reasoning shall end.

I found all I have to say on the providence, the wisdom, and the prescience of God. Either

God is or is not wise; if he be wise, he must have left nothing to chance, he must have proposed an end to himself, an end in every thing that he has done; and, hence his prescience, his providence, and the doctrine of irrevocable fate.

If God be without wisdom, he is no longer a God; he is an irrational being, a blind chance, a contradictory assemblage of attributes which cannot really exist.

Wisdom, providence, and prescience must necessarily, therefore, be the attributes of the Deity, and this will sufficiently prove that God sees effects in their causes; and that, as an omnipotent Being, his will accords with all he foresees. Let us remark, as we go, that this destroys all future contingencies, with respect to God; for there can be no incertitude in futurity, relatively to an omniscient Being, who wills all he can, and who can all he wills.

You will not think it improper that I should answer the objections you have made to me. I shall follow the order you have observed, that, by the parallel, the truth may become the more evident. The freedom of man, as defined by you, cannot, according to my principle, have any adequate cause; for, as that freedom can only be derived from God, I will prove to you

that a contradiction is implied, and that; therefore, the thing is impossible.

I. God cannot change the essence of things; for, as impossible as it is for him to give four sides to a triangle and still preserve it a triangle, or to prevent what is past having been, equally impossible is it for him to change his proper essence. Now it is a part of his essence (as a wise omnipotent Deity, acquainted with the future) to fix the events which must happen through all ages. He cannot give man the freedom to act in a manner diametrically opposite to what he once has willed: the result of which is, that it is a contradiction to affirm God can bestow freedom on man.

II. Man thinks, gives himself motion, and acts, I allow; but it is in a manner subordinate to the immutable laws of fate. All had been foreseen by the Deity, and all regulated; but man, who is ignorant of the future, does not perceive that, in seeming to act with independency, all his actions tend to fulfil the decrees of Providence.

Here freedom haughty slave imprison'd lies,
By magic chains invisible confin'd:
Beneath a yoke unknown, which nought can break,
Jehovah him sans tyranny subjects *.

* *Henriade.*

T 4

III. I will

III. I will own I was dazzled by the beginning of your third objection, and surprised to behold a deceitful God arising out of my own system. But we must examine whether this God deceive us so much as our opponents would have it believed. It is not an infinitely wise, an infinitely consistent Being, who imposes upon his creatures by a feigned freedom, which he seems to have bestowed. He does not say to them you are free, you may act according to your will, &c. but he has thought proper to conceal the springs by which they are actuated from their sight. The effect of the passions is not here the question; for this effect is entirely open to our examination. On the contrary, we have expressly to enquire what the motives are which determine our will. These we should find to be an idea of happiness which we figure to ourselves, or of advantage which we hope to obtain; and this supposition is the rule of all the acts of our will.

Thus, for example, a thief would not steal, if he did not imagine to himself happiness in the possession of the property on which he means to seize; a miser would not heap gold on gold, if he did not enjoy imaginary happiness in collecting all this wealth; a general would not expose his life, if he did not find happiness in the idea
of

of the glory he might acquire, in the rank he might attain, or in the rewards he had reason to expect. In a word, men are governed wholly by the ideas they entertain of what may be to their advantage and welfare.

IV. I think I have sufficiently shewn the contradiction which is encountered in the system of free decision, as well relatively to the perfections of God as to what daily experience teaches us of ourselves. You will allow with me that the least actions of life originate in a certain principle, in the idea of advantage which strikes us, and which are called rational motives. These, according to me, form the momentum and the counterpoise, which give motion to all the machines on earth; these are the hidden springs which it has pleased God to employ, that he might subject our actions to his supreme will: the temperaments of men, and occasional causes, both equally subservient to the divine will, afterward give modifications to the will of man, and are the origin of that remarkable difference which we observe in his actions.

V. It seems to me that the revolutions of the celestial bodies, and the order to which all those worlds are subjected, might supply me with another very strong argument in support of absolute

lute necessity. A small knowledge of astronomy will teach us the infinite regularity with which the planets perform their courses. We are further informed of the laws of gravity, attraction, and motion, which are all the immutable laws of nature.

If bodies of this kind, if worlds, if systems, are subjected to fixed and permanent laws, how will Clarke and Newton afterward affirm that a being so small, so imperceptible comparatively to systems so vast; what do I say? a wretched reptile; which crawls on the surface of the earth; which is but a point in the universe; a miserable creature; shall he alone have the right to act by chance, to be governed by no law, and, in despite of his Creator, to determine on his actions without reason? For, whoever maintains the entire freedom of man, positively denies man to be a reasonable creature, and that he is governed according to the principles which I have above alleged: this is an evident falsity, to be convinced of which we need but be acquainted with you.

VI. Having already answered your sixth objection, it is sufficient, here, for me to repeat that God, not being able to change the essence of things, is consequently unable to deprive himself of his attributes.

VII. Having

VII. Having proved that it would be contradictory in God to bestow freedom of action on man, it would be superfluous to answer to the seventh objection; though I cannot help, in the name of Wolf and Leibnitz, observing to Clarke and Newton, that a God who, in the government of the world, attends to the smallest particulars, directs all the actions of men, at the same time that he provides for the wants of a number of worlds, which he supports, appears to me much more admirable than a God who, like the grandees of Spain, addicted to indolence, remains unemployed. What indeed would become of the immensity of God, were we, that we might give him ease, to deprive him of all these small cares? I repeat, the system of Wolf explains the motives of the actions of men conformable to the attributes of God, and to the authority of experience.

VIII. With respect to the violent emotions and passions of men, these are springs we are obliged to remark, for they visibly appear to the senses; yet the others do not less exist; though, in order to discover them, greater application of mind and longer meditation are requisite.

IX. Desire and will are two things which must not be confounded I will grant; but the triumph of the will over the desire proves nothing.

thing in favour of freedom. This triumph, on the contrary, only proves that an idea of glory, which we imagine to ourselves when we suppress the desire, an idea of pride, and also sentiments of prudence, have determined us to conquer the desire; which is equivalent to the principle I before established.

X. Since without God the world could not have been created, as you allow, and since I have proved that man is not free, it follows that, there being a God, there is an absolute necessity; and, there being an absolute necessity, man must consequently be subjected to it, and cannot enjoy freedom.

While we speak on man, all comparisons derived from man may be applied; but, when we speak of God, if I am not deceived, all such comparisons become false, since we then attribute to him human ideas; we make him act like a man, and entirely opposite to his divine majesty.

Shall I proceed to refute the system of the Socinians, having sufficiently established my own? As soon as it is demonstrated that God is incapable of acting contrary to his essence, we may draw the consequence that all reasoning which tends to prove the freedom of man must ever continue false. The system of Wolf

is founded on the attributes which it is demonstrated God possesses ; the contrary system has no other basis than supposition ; and, as it is certain that the first of these suppositions is evidently false, you will comprehend that all the others fall of themselves.

That I may leave nothing to resume, it is necessary I should make you remark an inconsistency which I find in the pleasure which God takes in seeing free creatures act. We do not perceive that we judge of all things by a certain application to ourselves. Thus, for example, because a man takes pleasure in contemplating a laborious republic of ants, providing, with a kind of wisdom, for their subsistence, we imagine that God must take the 'same pleasure in contemplating the actions of men. We do not perceive, while we reason thus, that pleasure is a human passion, that God is not man, but that he is perfectly happy in himself, and is neither susceptible of joy, sorrow, love, hatred, nor of any of the passions which disturb the tranquillity of mankind.

It is indeed affirmed that God sees the past, the present, and the future ; that he does not grow old with time, and that the present moment, months, years, or millions of years, effect no change in his being, and can have no more comparison

comparifon to his duration, which has neither beginning nor end, than to an instant; lefs even than to the twinkling of the eye.

I own to you that the God of Mr. Clarke made me laugh heartily; he is certainly a God who frequents coffee-houfes, and makes political conjectures on the prefent events of Europe, in company with miserable news-mongers. He muft, at this moment, be exceedingly embarrassed to divine what will be the fate of the approaching campaign in Hungary, and muft impatiently wait till fuch events are paff, to know whether he has or has not been deceived in his conjectures.

I fhall add but one reflection to what I have faid; which is, that neither freedom of determination nor abfolute neceffity difculpate the Deity from the participation of guilt; for, whether God give us the freedom to do ill, or induce us immediately to the commiffion of ill, it amounts to nearly the fame thing; it is only fomething more or fomething lefs. Examine the origin of evil, and you can only attribute it to God; unlefs you will embrace the opinion of the Manichæans, who hold two principles, a good and an evil; and this is equally furrounded with difficulties.

Since, therefore, according to our fystems, God is alike the father of virtue and of vice,
fince

since neither Clarke, Locke, nor Newton, offer any thing which conciliate the sanctity of God with the author of guilt, I am obliged to persist in my system; it is most connected, most consistent; and I find a kind of consolation in that absolute necessity by which all is directed, which induces us to act, and which fixes fate. You will tell me, it is a poor consolation which is obtained from reflecting on our misery, and the immutability of our destiny. This I allow, but we must be satisfied with that consolation, for want of a better. It resembles those remedies which give ease to pain, and leave nature time to accomplish a cure.

After having shewn you what my opinions are, I now, like you, come to the insufficiency of our knowledge. It appears to me that men were not formed to reason profoundly on abstract subjects. God has instructed them, as much as it was necessary for them to be instructed to guide themselves in the world, but not as much as was requisite to satisfy their curiosity. Man is made to act, and not to meditate.

Understand me to be what you please, sir, provided you will but believe you are personally the strongest argument that can be offered me in favour of man, as a being. I have a more advantageous idea of the perfection of human

human nature while I consider you, and am the more persuaded that nothing but a God, or something divine, was able to assemble in the same person all the perfections you possess. You are not governed by independent ideas; you act according to principle, according to the most sublime reason; therefore, you act according to necessity.

This system, far from being contrary to humanity and the virtues, is very favourable to them; since, finding our interest, our happiness, and our satisfaction to consist in the exercise of virtue, it becomes necessary in us always to incline to act virtuously; and, as I cannot be ungrateful without becoming insupportable to myself, my happiness, my repose, and the idea of my own welfare oblige me to gratitude.

I allow men do not always pursue virtue; but that is because they do not all form the same ideas concerning happiness. External causes, or their passions, induce them to conduct themselves after different manners, and according as they imagine it to be their interest, in moments when the tumult of the passions overstep the cool deliberations of reason.

You will perceive, sir, by what I have said, my metaphysical opinions by no means overturn the principles of good morality; especially

since the purest reason teaches us to discover our only and our true interest in the preservation of this sound morality.

In other respects, I treat my system as good children do their parents; they know but they conceal their defects. I shew you one side of a picture, but I am not ignorant that the other may be turned. We may dispute for ages on such kind of subjects, and after having exhausted them, as it may be said, we return to the point from which we departed. We soon come to the ass of Buridan *.

I cannot often enough tell you, sir, how delighted I am with your frankness. Your sincerity merits no small praise; by this you convince me you are one of my friends, that your mind loves the truth, and that you will never conceal it from me. Be persuaded, sir, that your friendship and approbation are more flattering to me than that of half the human race would be. With Cicero I say to myself

“The gods are Cæsar’s; Cato is for Pompey.”

* Buridan was a famous doctor of the fourteenth century, in the university of Paris, who, probably, from his name having become proverbial in France, first maintained the assertion that an ass placed between two bundles of hay, equally attractive, would die with hunger; because he would be unable to choose. T.

Were I in company with the divine Emily, I should tell her—"You are blessed among women, for you possess one of the greatest men on earth."—I should further add—"Emily has chosen the good part, she has chosen philosophy."

You certainly, sir, were necessary to my happiness in this world. You have sent me two epistles which never had their equal. And shall it continually be said that you surpass yourself? I have not judged the epistles you have sent me as a philosophic theme, but have considered them as works woven by the hands of the Graces. You have robbed Virgil of his fame as an epic poet, have surpassed Corneille in tragedy, and you are now surpassing the epistles of Boileau. It must be owned you are a man to be feared. Yours is the monarchy which Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream, and which swallowed up all that had gone before.

I conclude by intreating you will not long suffer the charming epistles you have sent me to remain solitary; but that you will send their companions; I wait for them with the utmost impatience, and that avidity with which all your works inspire the reader. Philosophy proves you are the man on earth most worthy my esteem; my heart induces me and grati-
rude

tude obliges me to credit the proofs; judge, therefore, of the sentiments with which I am, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Remusberg, February 19, 1738*.

I HAVE just received the letter you wrote to me dated January the 22d; I there see with what tenderness you endeavour to excuse my faults, and with what sincerity you wish to point them out to me. You condescend for a while to quit the heaven of Newton, and the delightful company of the Muses, that you may aid in washing a poet who is newly plunged into the sportive waters of Hippocrene. You quit the pencil, and, in my behalf, take up the burnisher; nay you even take the trouble to teach me to spell, you who so well know how to think. Yet I am about to importune you once more; though I fear you will suppose me to be one of

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

those people, by whom, having once given them alms, we are continually teased.

Madame du Chatelet has addressed verses to me, which, from their beauty, their dignity, and their original turn, have incited my admiration. I was at the same time very much astonished to perceive myself there called divine; I know, for the same reasons as Alexander knew, that I am not of celestial origin; and I very much fear that, as a God, my fate will be similar to that swarm of new deities who Lucian tells us were driven out of heaven by Jupiter; or like the saints which the sieur de Launoy thought proper to displace from Paradise.

Be this as it may, I have replied in verse to the marchioness du Chatelet, and I intreat you, sir, to impart some finishing stroke to the piece, that it may be worthy of being presented to Emily. This Emily I regard as a deity of ancient times, whom we are not permitted to address in human language. We must deliver ourselves in the language of the gods, and address her in verse. But mere mortals must be allowed to stammer when they endeavour to speak a tongue so unknown. For this reason I hope you deities will excuse the errors of us poor mortals, when we pretend to speak in your language. I expect a thunder-bolt should be
hurled,

hurled, by the Jupiter of Cirey, against a certain metaphysical essay, which I have ventured to send. I exerted myself to the utmost that I might rise to the heaven of metaphysics; I waved my arms, and imagined I flew; but, do all I can, I perfectly feel the nature of my mind is such as to disable me from surmounting every difficulty I encounter in the career. The Creator seems to have given us sufficient reason to act with prudence in this world, and to provide for our wants; but this reason does not seem adequate to satisfy the insatiable fund of curiosity which we bring with us, and which often extends too far. The absurdities and contradictions we every where meet with continually give birth to scepticism; and, by heating the imagination, we at length consult nothing but imagination.

There is one thing which I hold to be an uncontested truth, and that is the pleasure and admiration which you incite in me. This is no illusion of the senses, this is no frivolous prejudice, but a perfect knowledge of the most amiable man on earth. I am, with all possible esteem,

SIR,

Your very faithful affectionate friend.

U 3

P. S. I am

P. S. I am going to erase every asterisk, and to correct, change, and labour, till I have conformed to all your remarks. Merope shall not quit my possession. She is a virgin, of whose honour I have taken charge.

L E T T E R XLVII.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

February 27th, 1738*.

YOUR works are invaluable: this is a truth of which I have long been convinced, but which does not prevent me from being highly in your debt. The trifles I send you are but marks of remembrance, tokens which ought to make you recollect the pleasure I have received from your writings. It should seem, sir, that the arts and sciences serve you periodically. The present quarter appears to be that of poetry. You have lately finished a new tragedy. Where do you find time? Or, do you write verse with the same ease as you do prose? Every

* Dated February 26th, 1737, in the Berlin edition.

question is a problem. Either you must bend day and night over your labours, or Heaven must have granted you, beside the excellent talents you possess, a facility which is wholly extraordinary.

Merope shall not quit my possession ; in this my self-love is too much interested, I being the sole possessor of a piece written by you. I prefer it to all the tragedies which have appeared in France, the death of Cæsar excepted. Love intrigues appear to me proper for comedy, of which they are, as it were, the essence ; they form the knot that is to be untied ; and, as the play must end in some manner, marriage seems to me to be a very proper one.

As to tragedy, I should say there are tragic subjects which naturally require the author to treat on the passion of love. Such are Titus and Berenice ; the Cid ; and Phædra and Hippolytus. The only inconvenience is that love is too like itself ; and, having seen twenty plays, the mind is disgusted by the continual repetition of the same honeyed speeches, which are too far removed from the manners of our age. Since, with good reason, a degree of ridicule has been affixed to romantic love, the pathos of extravagant tenderness is no longer felt ; its whining is supportable during the first act, but

we feel ourselves very much inclined to laugh at its simplicity in the fourth or fifth.

The passion which animates Merope, on the contrary, speaks with the voice of nature, and with sensations common to all hearts. We do not mock at that which we ourselves feel, or at that which we are capable of feeling. Merope acts exactly as a tender mother would act, who should happen to be in her situation. She speaks to our hearts, and the actor expresses nothing more than what is felt by every body.

I have written to Berlin for the Merope of the marquis Maffei; though I am well convinced his tragedy does not approach yours in excellence. The men of literature in France will ever remain invincible, while there are persons of your order at their head; I dare even affirm that I should think them infinitely more formidable than your armies, led by all your marshals.

I here send you an ode lately finished, but not so bad as the preceding. Cesario was the cause that it was written: the poor youth had an excessive fit of the gout, and wrote to me in language which pierced me to the soul. I could do nothing for him but preach patience; a feeble remedy, I grant, against real evil, yet a remedy capable of pacifying the impetuous sallies of
th

the mind, to which acute pains give birth. That you will correct the defects which you will perceive in this ode is what I expect from your candour and friendship. I feel I am the father of it, yet should be angry with myself were I incapable of seeing the defects of my own offspring.

So much is error our inheritance,
That, be the poet madman, be he sage,
By self-love flatter'd, dazzled, and deceiv'd,
Unable to withhold his own applause,
Each line he writes some new-born beauties spring.

You will not forget to repeat the high esteem I have for the marchioness du Chatelet, whose ingenious wit discovers itself by a short specimen. It is a ray of the sun which darts through the clouds. But why does it not shine out? Perhaps the marchioness is obliged to veil her mind, as Moses did his countenance, because the people of Israel were unable to support its brightness. But, though I should be struck blind, I must, before I die, behold this land of Canaan, this country of the sages, this terrestrial paradise.

Be certain of the perfect esteem, and inviolable friendship, with which I am, &c,

LET-

L E T T E R XLVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Cirey, March 8, 1738.

THE most zealous of your admirers is not the most industrious of your correspondents; and the reason of this is he is the oftenest ill, and is seized by a fever when he wishes to pass the most agreeable hours of life, in writing to your royal highness.

We received your excellent prose, of the 19th of February, and your verses for the marchioness du Chatelet, who blushes, is charmed, and who knows not how to reply to arts so seductive. We also received, with your letter of the 27th, the ode on patience, with which the royal muse alleviates the sufferings of the baron von Kayserling. By this ode I have myself profited; it agrees well with the present languid state of my health. The remedy was as effectual for me as for your gouty patient, for I hold myself to be his equal in philosophy. Like him, I feel the value of your poetry, and like him find a charm against all ills, in the letter of your royal highness.

T.

To patience you exhort your friend,
 In lines so eloquently penn'd,
 That patience, when your works we read,
 We surely never less can need *.

Since you deign, sir, to employ your leisure in the delights of poetry, I here take the liberty to send you the third epistle on happiness, the subject of which is envy, a passion with which I ardently desire your royal highness should inspire all sovereigns.

I send you my verses, and you, sir, return me yours; this reminds me of the perpetual traffic Hesiod says subsists between heaven and earth: the earth sends up vapours, and the gods return refreshing dews. Infinite thanks, sir, for your dew: but my poor ground will very soon lie fallow. Disease ruins my constitution, and soon will render mine a barren field. But my last fruits shall be for you.

*Extremum hunc, Archibusa, mibi concede laborem,
 Pauca Frederico.*

I have, however, written two new acts, in bed, instead of the two last acts of Merope,

* Here is a proof (of which many more might be given, in contradiction to the rule of Addison) that puns are sometimes capable of being translated. T.

which

which I thought too languid. Whenever your royal highness wishes to see the produce of your own advice, in these new acts, I will do myself the honour to send them. I have it much at heart to give the world a tragedy which is not embellished by any love intrigue, and which deserves to be read. I shall thus render some service to the French theatre, which, in reality, is too gallant. The play is without love. Thus, the first piece I do myself the honour to send to Remusberg will merit to have for its title *De remedio amoris*.

I certainly have a very profound respect for love, and all that appertains to love; but that this sovereign should entirely monopolize tragedy is usurpation; and I will at least *protest* against usurpation, not being able to do better. This, sir, is all I have to say at present, on the poetic department; but, with respect to that of metaphysics, I am greatly embarrassed.

The letter of your royal highness, dated February 17th, is in truth a master-piece. I regard your two letters on freedom among the strongest, best connected, and most consistent essays I have met with on the subject. You certainly are highly indebted to nature, for having endowed you with a genius which raises you to monarchy in the intellectual world, before
you

you become a monarch in this miserable world of passion, grimace, and shew.

I hold the opinion of necessity in great respect, though it is not my own ; for, while swimming in a sea of incertitude, and catching only at a straw, I shall take good care not to reproach my brother navigators with the weakness of that straw at which they catch; and I should be very glad, should my reed break, if my neighbour could lend me his. I have a much higher respect for the opinion I have controverted, now your royal highness has displayed it in so fair a point of view. Will you permit me once more to state my doubts ?

That I may not weary the Marcus Aurelius of Germany, I shall confine myself to two ideas which make a strong impression on me, and concerning which I request information.

I. The more I examine myself, the more, in various cases, I believe myself to be free. This is an opinion common to all men, as well as to myself ; for it is the invariable principle of our conduct. The most determined partisans of necessity all guide themselves according to the principles of freedom. Now, I ask how they are able to reason and act in so contrary a manner ; and what they will gain by considering themselves as turnspits, when they always be-
have

have as if they were not in the wheel? I once more ask, what is the reason that the Author of nature has given us this supposition of freedom, if it do not exist? Speak truly; is there any solution to this problem? Is it not an evasion to reply, God has not said you are free? God undoubtedly has not said we are free, for God does not deign to speak to us; but he has impressed our hearts with a feeling which nothing can enfeeble; and this feeling is to us the voice of God. All our other sensations are true. He does not deceive us in the desire we have to be happy, to eat, drink, and propagate our species. When we feel desires, those desires certainly exist; when we are sensible of pleasure, we are well assured we do not feel pain; when we see, it is beyond dispute that the action of seeing is not that of hearing; when we have thoughts, it is very clear that we think; and shall the sensation we have of freedom be the only one in which a being, infinitely perfect, shall sport with us, by deceiving us with an absurd illusion? What! When I confess that a dérangement of my organs deprives me of freedom, do I not deceive myself; and yet am I deceived when I say I am free?

I know not whether this unadorned explanation of what passes within us will make any

impression on your philosophic mind ; but I conjure you, sir, to examine the idea, to allow it its whole extent, and afterward to judge it without respect to party, and even without considering other more metaphysical principles, which militate against this moral proof. You will then see which ought to be preferred ; a moral proof, which exists in all men, or metaphysical ideas, which ever bear the character of incertitude.

II. My second doubt turns on a more philosophic view of the question. I perceive that all which has ever been said, against the freedom of man, applies, with still increasing force, against the freedom of God.

If it be said, God has foreseen all our actions, and that for that cause they are necessary ; God has also foreseen his own, which are so much the more necessary as God is immutable. If it be urged, man cannot act without an adequate cause, which cause directs his will ; the adequate cause ought to have still greater power over the will of God, who is a being supremely reasonable.

If it be affirmed, man must *choose* that which appears to him to be the best, God is under a still greater necessity to *perform* that which is the best.

Here

Here then we find God become the slave of Fate. He is no longer a being who determines for himself, he is determined by some external cause; he is no longer an agent, no longer a God.

But, if God be free, as the necessitarians themselves must confess, why could not God communicate a portion of that freedom to man, in communicating to him being, thought, motion, and will, all which are equally unknown? Was it more difficult for God to bestow freedom on us than to bestow the power of walking, eating, and digesting? A demonstration is necessary, in order to prove that God could not communicate the attribute of freedom to man; and, to obtain this demonstration, it is requisite to know the attributes of the Divinity. But who knows those attributes?

It is said that God, by giving us freedom, would have made man a deity. On what ground is this said? Why should I be a God, with a portion of freedom, who am not a God, with a portion of intelligence? To be possessed of feeble power, confined and temporary, to choose and to begin motion, is this to be a God? There is no medium; either we are automata, who do nothing, and in whom God does all, or we are agents; that is to say, free creatures.

I demand

I demand proof that we are simple automata, and that our interior sensation of freedom is an illusion.

All the proofs that are brought are reduced to the prescience of God. But, is it precisely known what this prescience is? No, of that we are certainly ignorant. How, therefore, can we employ our ignorance on the supreme attributes of God, to prove the falsity of a real sensation; that is, of the freedom which we feel in ourselves?

I cannot conceive any congruity between prescience and freedom, I allow; but must I therefore reject freedom? Must I deny that I am a thinking being, because I cannot perceive how matter can think, nor how a thinking being can be the slave of matter? To reason *a priori*, as it is called, is a very fine thing, but it is a mode of reasoning to which man is incompetent. We are on the banks of a large river; and we must ascend the stream, before we venture to speak of its source.

It certainly would be very fortunate, if we could establish clear, indubitable, and numerous principles of metaphysics; whence an infinite number of consequences might be derived, as in mathematics. But God has not willed that the thing should be thus. The patrimony of meta-

physics he has reserved to himself. The reign of pure ideas and of the essence of things is his own. If any one has participated this celestial inheritance, it is certainly you, sir; and my heart will say of you what parasites say of kings, when they tell them, they are the images of the Deity.

With respect to the verses, which you have deigned to cite from the *Henriade*, they were only written with an intent to say that our freedom does not injure the divine prescience, which constitutes what we call fate. I have expressed myself somewhat loosely in that passage; but we cannot always precisely say what we wish to say in poetry: the wheel runs round, and hurries away the man by its rapidity.

Before I conclude, permit me to inform your royal highness that the Socinians, who deny the prescience of God relative to contingencies, possess a great apostle, with whom perhaps they are unacquainted. I speak of Cicero, in his book of divination. That great man was better pleased to rob the Gods of their prescience than men of their freedom.

Superior as he was, as an orator, I do not believe he could have answered your objections. He would in vain have made long periods; it would only have been found contending with truth.

truth. But here let us leave him and his fine phrases.

Permit me to observe to your royal highness that the Gods of Cicero and the God of Newton and of Clarke are not of the same species. We may well say of the former that they were Gods reasoning in coffee-houses, on the operations of the ensuing campaign; for whoever possesses no prescience can but conjecture, and whoever can do nothing better than conjecture is liable to say as many silly things as the London journal, or the Dutch gazette. But not so Sir Isaac Newton and Samuel Clarke; who individually were as philosophic as Tully was loquacious.

Dr. Clarke, who has examined these subjects deeply, of which Newton only spoke occasionally, says, as I think with reason, that we are unable to ascend toward an imperfect knowledge of the divine attributes, except as from a given number we ascend toward infinites, proceeding from the known toward the unknown.

Each mode of perception, limited and finite in man, is infinite in God. The mind of man can only contemplate one object at a time, but God embraces all. From our knowledge of the character of a man, we foresee how that man will act on a given occasion; and God foresees, by the same kind of knowledge infinitely ex-

tended, how that man will act. Thus, what is in us the science of conjecture, and which does not militate against freedom, is in God the science of certainty, which is as little militant as the former. This manner of reasoning does not appear to me to be very ridiculous.

But I perceive, sir, how ardent I am to weary you with my ideas; neither do I do any thing more than enfeeble the ideas of others. Your goodness only gives me courage. I find your heart to be as humane as your mind is extensive. In your verses to the baron von Kayserling, I read how capable you are of friendship; for which reason my fourth epistle on happiness shall conclude with friendship, for without that there is no happiness on earth.

The marchioness du Chatelet admires you so highly that she dares not write to you; I must therefore be very adventurous, sir; I, who certainly do not admire you less, and who yet am a never-ending babbler.

Why am not I allowed to address you thus—?

*In publica commoda peccem,
Si longo sermone morer tua tempora, Cæsar.*

I am with the most profound respect, attachment, and gratitude unbounded, &c.

L E T-

LETTER XLIX.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Remusberg, March 28, 1738.*

I RECEIVED your letter of the 8th of this month with a kind of inquietude concerning your health. Thiriot informed me it was not good, and this you have confirmed. It seems that Nature, who has bestowed mental endowments so great upon you, has acted the step-mother with respect to your health; as if she herself regretted that she had accomplished a perfect work. The infirmities of the body only could lead you to presume you were mortal; your works must persuade you to the contrary. The great men of antiquity were never more in dread of the implacable malice of fortune than after remarkable success. Your fever may be estimated in this manner as an equivalent, or as a counterpoise, to your Merope.

May I flatter myself that I have divined the corrections you have thought proper to make in your piece? You, a severe father, have assumed

* March the 7th in the Berlin edition.

the character of Brutus. For my own part, although I have not written it, nor have any other interest in it than that which I feel for the author, I have twice read *Mérope* with all the attention of which I am capable, without perceiving any defects. Your works resemble the sun, to discover the spots in which the eye must be very piercing.

To be kind enough to send me the four acts corrected, as you have given me to hope; otherwise erasures and corrections will render my copy confused, and difficult to decypher. Boileau and all the poets only could attain perfection by correcting. It is to be regretted that men, however great their talents may be, cannot produce excellence at a first essay; they acquire it only by degrees: it is necessary incessantly to efface, correct, and improve, and every step they make is the step of chastisement. Virgil, the prince of poetry, was employed in correcting his *Æneid* when he was overtaken by death. He, no doubt, was desirous his work should be as perfect as it existed in his own imagination, and which equalled that of the orator described by Cicero.

I have not yet received the *Maximien of La Chaussée*. I have seen the *School for Friends*, written by the same author, the title of which is
excellent,

excellent, but the writing is common-place, feeble, monotonous, and languid. Perhaps it is some temerity in me, who am a foreigner, and almost a barbarian, to judge of French plays ; still, whatever is dry or sluggish presently gives disgust.

We select the best French pieces to perform here. My memory is so indifferent that I am very difficult in the choice of the materials with which it is necessary it should be stored ; it is like a small garden, in which we do not sow every kind of seed with indifference, but embellish it with none but the most rare and exquisite flowers.

By the pieces which I send you will judge of the fruits of my retreat and your instructions. Let me intreat you to redouble your sincerity, respecting all which comes from me. I have leisure, patience, and, in addition, nothing better to do than to alter those passages in my works which you think deserve reproof.

The life of the czarina and the czarowitz is at present writing. I hope I shall soon be able to send you whatever I can collect on this subject ; among the anecdotes you will find barbarities and cruelties similar to those of which we read in the history of the first Cæsars. Russia was a country into which the arts and sciences

had not penetrated. The czar had no tincture of humanity, magnanimity, or virtue; he had been educated in the lowest ignorance, and acted only according to the impulse of his irregular passions. So true is it that inclination leads men to ill; and that they are good only in proportion as education, or experience, may have moderated the impetuosity of their temperament.

I was acquainted with the grand marshal of the court (of Prussia) Printz, who was alive in 1724, and who, under the reign of the late king, had been our envoy in Russia. He informed me that, when he came to Petersburg, he demanded permission to present his credentials, and that he was taken on board a ship, which was then on the stocks. Little accustomed to such an audience, he asked where was the czar; and the monarch was pointed out to him, busied in managing the tackling on deck. When the czar perceived the ambassador, he desired him to come to him by ascending a rope ladder; and, when he excused himself, alleging his awkwardness, the czar came sliding down a rope to him like a sailor.

The commission of the ambassador being very agreeable to the monarch, the latter was desirous of giving him some evident token of his satisfaction.

satisfaction. For this purpose, he ordered a sumptuous festival, to which M. von Printz was invited. The guests drank brandy to brutal excess, after the manner of the Russians; and the czar, willing to give a peculiar kind of relief to the scene, sent for about twenty of the Strelitz (guards) who were confined in the prisons of Petersburg, and, at the emptying of each glass, the intolerable monster beheaded one of these wretches. That he might afford a particular mark of respect to the ambassador, this unnatural prince, in order, according to his mode of speaking, to give him the pleasure of shewing his address, proposed he should partake of the office of executioner. Imagine what effect such a proposition must produce on a man possessed of sensibility, and goodness of heart! M. von Printz, whose feelings were as acute as those of any person whatever, refused an offer which in any other place would have been regarded as an insult to the character of an ambassador, but which, in this barbarous country, was merely a proof of civility. The czar was so vexed at his refusal that he could not forbear betraying signs of his indignation; though he thought proper to make reparation on the morrow.

This is no invented tale; it is so true that it

is found in the relations of M. von Printz, which are preserved in the archives. I have even spoken with several persons who were at Petersburg at this period, and who attested the truth of the fact. It is, therefore, not the tale of two or three individuals, but a notorious event.

From cruelties so horrible, let us revert to a subject more cheerful, gay, and agreeable; which shall be the after-piece to the tragedy.

I allude to the poetical productions of Gresset, who at present is one of the first of the French writers. This charming poet has the gift of expressing himself with much facility. His epithets are just and new, and he has turns which are peculiar to himself. We love his works in despite of their defects. He is not sufficiently careful, beyond dispute; and his indolence, which he praises so highly, is the greatest enemy of his fame. He has written an ode on the love of our country, which pleases me infinitely. It is full of ardour, and finished passages. You must have remarked that this poet is more successful in writing verses of eight syllables than of twelve.

Notwithstanding the goodness of the short pieces of Gresset, I do not believe he will ever write with effect for the theatre, or as an epic poet.

poet. Flashes of wit are not alone sufficient for compositions of such extent; energy, vigour, with a penetrating and ripened understanding, are requisite.

The cantata of *le Couvreur* is copying, according to your wishes; I shall send it to be shipwrecked on the shores of Cirey. French ears, accustomed to vaunderilles and anthems, are but little favourable to the methodical and expressive airs of the Italians. Musicians, to execute this piece in the taste in which it is written, are necessary, without whom it will appear just as affecting to you as the part of Brutus would, if recited by a Swiss or Austrian actor.

Let me intreat you to recollect that it is some time since you sent me the two first of the four moral epistles, which you have composed. Cesario is just arrived, with all the pieces with which you entrusted him, and for which I return you a thousand thanks. I am divided between friendship, curiosity, and joy. It is no small satisfaction to converse with one who comes from Cirey. How cold! How inadequate!—To my other self! Who, in imagination, transports me thither! I ask him a thousand questions at once, and, as often interrupting him, prevent him from returning any answer. Some days will be necessary for us to
be

be able rationally to interrogate each other. But I waste my time very unseasonably, when I preach to you of friendship, who are so well acquainted with, and have so excellently described, its effects.

I shall not at present say any thing of your works; I must read them coolly before I tell you my opinion. Not that I pretend to appreciate their value, for that would be injuring my own modesty; I will relate my doubts, and you will put my ignorance to the blush.

Salutation to the sublime Emily, and incense to the divine Voltaire!

L E T T E R L,

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

March 31st, 1738,

I AM obliged to inform you that I have, for two successive post days, received letters from M. Thiriot that have been opened. I would not even swear that the last you wrote to me had not been served in the same manner, know not whether it were in France, or in the states

states of the king my father, that they fell victims to such ill-placed curiosity. All that our correspondence contains might be known. Your letters breathe nothing but virtue and humanity; and mine, in general, only request that you would send me information on subjects * concerning which people in general trouble themselves but little. Yet, notwithstanding the innocence of our correspondence, you well know what men are, and that they are but too much inclined to give an ill interpretation to that which ought to be exempt from blame.

I, therefore, intreat you would no longer address those letters which relate to philosophy or poetry to M. Thiriot. Direct them rather to M. Tronchin du Breuil; for, though they will be longer on the road, I shall be indemnified by their security. When you write letters to me which only contain trifles, address them as usual to M. Thiriot, that the curious may have something to give them employment.

Cesario delights me with every thing he relates of Cirey. I am enchanted by your history of Louis XIV. I only could have wished that you had not ranked Machiavel, who was

* The French reads—ne contiennent que des éclaircissements que je vous demande—i. e. *contain* information which I request you to afford me. T.

a bad man, among the great men of his time. Whoever teaches us to break our promise, to oppress, and to commit injustice, were he a man the most distinguished by his abilities in other respects, never ought to occupy a place which is due alone to virtue, and praise-worthy talents. Cartouche does not deserve to be ranked with Boileau, Colbert, and Luxembourg. I am certain you are of my opinion; you are yourself too worthy a man to raise the fame of a contemptible villain to the rank of honour. I am, therefore, positive you have only considered Machiavel as a man of genius. Pardon my sincerity; were you not highly deserving of it, I would not be thus prodigal of truth.

If every history had been written like that which you have entrusted to me, we should have been better informed of the manners of all ages, and less deceived by historians. The more I am acquainted with you the more am I convinced you are a man unequalled. I never read a finer style than that in which the history of Louis XIV. is written. I read each paragraph twice, or three times, so great is the pleasure I receive; each line produces its effect, each contains excellent reflections; no false thought, nothing puerile; add to which, impartiality is perfectly preserved. When I have

read the whole work, I will send you some trifling remarks; and, among others, some on German proper names, which are rather ill treated, and which may tend to make the work obscure, since there are names so disfigured that the reader is obliged to guess at the person.

I could have wished you had written all the works that have been composed, the subject of which might afford instruction; we might then have profited by reading. I sometimes grow impatient when I meet with useless matter, puerile reflections, and that barrenness which is prevalent in certain books, and which the reader is obliged to re-write. But you spare your readers any such labour. Whether they have or have not judgment, they will equally profit by your works; nothing is necessary for them but memory.

Application and a struggle with the understanding are requisite, before I can study your elements of Newton, which cannot be till Easter is over, making a short absence to take

*Ce que vous savez,
Avec beaucoup de bienfaisance *.*

I shall repeat my doubts with the utmost frankness; ashamed to reduce you to the situa-

* That which you wot of with all decency.

tion of the Israelites, who could only rebuild the walls of Jerusalem by defending themselves with one hand while they laboured with the other.

You cannot but think my system insupportable; it is sometimes so to myself. I seek an object on which to fix my mind, and hitherto I find none; if you know any such, which is exempt from all contradiction, let me intreat you to point it out to me. If there be any thing, of which I am convinced, it is that there is an adorable Deity in heaven, and a Voltaire almost as estimable at Cirey.

I send a small trifle for the marchioness du Chatelet, which I beg you will prevail on her to accept. I hope she will condescend to preserve it with care, and use it in her compositions.

I could not leave your portrait in the possession of Cesarion; I envied my friend the double pleasure of having conversed with you, and of being in possession of your picture. This, said I to myself, is too much; we must divide the favours of fortune. We both think of you the same, and are rivals, contending who shall esteem and love you most. I almost had forgotten to mention your fugitive pieces.—Moderation in Happiness—The Padlock—The Temple of Friendship, &c. I am charmed with

them all! How much do you increase my gratitude!

Do not let the marchioness forget to open the ink-stand. Be persuaded there is nothing I more regret than my inability to convince you of the sentiments with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R L I.

From the Prince Royal.

S I R,

Rupin, April 19th, 1738*.

WHEN you are ill I am every way a loser; as well by the interest which I take, in whatever concerns you, as by the privation of an infinity of good thoughts, which I should have received, had your health permitted. For the love of humanity, do not alarm me any more by such frequent indispositions. Do not suppose either that these are metaphorical alarms, they are, to my misfortune, too real. I tremble when I apply to you the two finest lines which Rousseau perhaps ever wrote.

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

Et ne mesurons point au nombre des années
La course des héros *.

Cefario gave me an exact account of the state of your health; I have consulted physicians on the subject, and they have assured me, by the faith of the faculty, that your life is in no danger; but that, with respect to your indisposition, it could not be radically cured, because the evil was too inveterate. According to their judgment, you have an obstruction in the viscera. They say that some of the vessels are there relaxed; and that phlegm, flatulency, or a species of the nephritis, is the cause of your complaint. Such is the judgment they have been able to give, at a hundred leagues distance.

Although I place but little faith in the decisions of these gentlemen, which are often more uncertain than those of the metaphysicians, I still very earnestly intreat you to have the *status morbi* drawn up, that we may try whether some able physician cannot afford you relief. How great would be my joy could I, in any manner, contribute to the re-establishment of your health! I intreat, therefore, that you would send me a list of your infirmities and your sufferings, in barbarous terms, and the jargon of the

* Judge not of heroes by their length of life.

faculty, but with all possible precision. You will thus very sensibly oblige me, and this is a small sacrifice which you are indebted to my friendship.

You inform me you have received some of my writings, and you add no critical remarks. Do not imagine that I have neglected the errors you have pointed out in my former pieces. I join the new corrections I have made in the ode on the love of God, with a short poem addressed to Cefario.

The mania of rhyming possesses me incessantly, and I fear it is one of those ills which are incapable of cure. Since the Apollo of Cirey has kindly protected the atoms of Remusberg, all its inhabitants cultivate the arts and sciences. I also add a letter from a young man who lives with me to one of his friends. A few words from you would give him infinite encouragement. He has a genius which will be formed by cultivation, and which is inactive from the fear of doing amiss.

I could rather wish you had need of my ode on patience to console you for the coldness of a mistress than for the support of your infirmities. It is easy to send consolation, when we ourselves feel no pain; but to triumph over the most acute feelings, and to write with perfect freedom

of mind, even while afflicted, is the effort of superior genius.

Your epistle on Envy is inimitable; I almost prefer it even to its two twin sisters. You speak of envy like a man who has felt the evil it may do, and with those generous sentiments which are your proper patrimony. I always discover you in great sentiments: you feel them so truly that you express them with facility.

How mention my writings, after having spoken of yours? What you have been pleased to say somewhat partakes of irony. My verses are the fruits of the wild crab, yours of the flourishing tree of the orchard.

Behold the tow'ring eagle rise
Returning to his native skies;
Behold the humble swallow skim
The ground, and o'er the surface swim;
Thou art the thunder-bearing bird,
With swallows am I doom'd to herd.

I am entirely of your opinion, respecting theatrical pieces; the charming passion of love ought only to be used like spice in ragouts; they ought not to be loaded with it, lest this uniform taste should deprive the palate of its most exquisite sensations. Merope deserves in every respect to correct the corrupted taste of the public, and to rescue Melpomene from the contempt

tempt into which she has been cast by trifling ornaments. I entirely rely on the goodness of the corrections which you have made in the two last acts of that tragedy; little was wanting to render it perfect; and it certainly is a perfect work at present.

Corneille, Racine, and, after them, La Grange, have exhausted all the common-place thoughts of the most tender gallantry. Crebillion, as we may say, has familiarised the Furies with the stage; his tragedies all inspire horror; all is dreadful, terrible. It was necessary the successor of these poets should quit the beaten track, and follow one more new and splendid. The passions which you have introduced are as capable of moving, interesting, and pleasing, as love is; it was only necessary to treat them properly, and to display them after the manner in which you have done, in *Merope* and the *Death of Cæsar*.

T' enlighten France thee Heav'n design'd;
 With conscious strength and ardent mind,
 The dang'rous epic path we see
 Thee tread, with grace and majesty.
 Thucydides thou risest next.
 Newton and Nature's page, perplex'd,
 Having with daring soul display'd,
 Thou turn'st, to yield thy godlike aid

To sick Melpomene, who lies
Despairing, and without thee dies !

But I quit the bright regions of poetry, that I may descend with you into the chaos of metaphysics. I renounce the language of the gods, which I can but stammer, to speak that of the Deity himself, with which I am unacquainted. We must at present raise a building the foundations of which will have little solidity; the work of a spider in the air, composed of most fine-drawn threads.

No person can be less prejudiced, in favour of his opinion, than I am, in favour of mine. I have discussed the subject of necessity with all possible application, and I have found difficulties attending it almost insurmountable. I have read an infinite number of systems, not one of which is not hedged round by absurdity, which threw me into fearful scepticism. Neither have I any particular reason which rather inclines me toward necessity than freedom. Be the truth as it may, things will continue in the same train. I support such questions to the best of my power, that I may perceive how far human reasoning can extend, and on which side most absurdity may be discovered.

But it is something different with *the adequate cause*. Every man who wishes to be a philosopher,

pher, a mathematician, or a politician, in a word, every man who wishes to extend his ideas, must admit *an adequate cause*.

What is this adequate cause?—It is the cause of what happens; of which cause, of which principle, every philosopher is in search; therefore, every philosopher admits *an adequate cause*. It is founded on our most evident ideas. Nothing cannot produce being, and, since Nothing cannot have existence, it necessarily results that Beings or Effects must have a preceding Cause for their being, and this cause is called the adequate cause of their existence. None but the vulgar, unacquainted with the existence of an adequate cause, attribute effects, the causes of which they are unacquainted with, to chance. Chance, in this sense, is a being which has sprung from the chimerical brain of the poets; and which, like the soap bubbles that are blown up by children, has no body.

You are now about to drink the lees of my nectar, on this subject of absolute necessity. I much fear lest the same thing should happen to you, with me and my hypothesis, as did to me the other day. I had read, in I know not what book, something concerning the cephalopharyngian muscle. I looked into Furetière's dictionary, that I might find an explanation of the

word, and was told that the cephalopharyngian muscle is the orifice of the œsophagus, named pharynx. Really, exclaimed I, I am now much the wiser ! Explanations are often more obscure than the thing explained.—But, to return to my own explanation.

I confess, at present, that men have a sensation of freedom ; they have that which they denominate the power of determining their will, and of influencing their motions. If you call the act of influencing motion, the act of assuming a resolution, the act of performing some action, if, I say, you call these acts the freedom of man, I then agree with you that man is free. But if you call the reasons which determine him in his resolutions, and the causes of the motions he makes, freedom, I can prove that man is not free. My proofs are drawn from experience, and the observations I have made on the motives of my own actions and of the actions of others.

I maintain that all men are determined by reasons (which, whether good or bad, does not affect my hypothesis) and these reasons are founded on a certain supposition of happiness, or well being. Whence does it happen that, when a bookseller brings me the *Henriade* and the filthy epigrams of Rousseau, from which to choose,

choose, I prefer the *Henriade*? It is because the *Henriade* is a perfect work, by which my heart and understanding may excellently profit; whereas, the epigrams of Rousseau would but begrime my imagination. Therefore, the supposition of my own advantage, of my own good, induces me to determine in favour of one of these works, and to reject the other. By the same rule, the supposition of my happiness determines all my actions. This is the spring on which I depend for motion, and this spring is connected with another, which is temperament, or constitution. It is precisely with this wheel that the Creator winds up our machine. Man has the same freedom as a pendulum; he has certain vibrations, and can perform certain acts; but all are subservient to his temperament, and to his manner of thinking, more or less confined.

Ask any man, however stupid he may be, the reason of one of his actions, and he will produce some reason by which he was determined to act. Man is subservient to a law of nature, and consequently to the tone of temperament given him by the Creator. Let us therefore conclude that all men contain in themselves the momentum which determines or occasions their resolves. In behalf of absolute necessity,

necessity, I could wish that no subterfuge had ever been sought from false argument against freedom; such as that which you so well oppose, and so totally destroy. In effect, nothing can be more inconsistent *.

There is great temerity in wishing to reason on things which we do not understand, and there is still infinitely more in wishing to prescribe limits to divine omnipotence. I do but simply examine truths which are known to me, and from these I conclude that, since they are thus, it is the will of God they so should be. My reasoning does but connect the effects of nature with their primitive cause, which exists in God. According to this system, God, having foreseen the effects of temperament and character in man, preserves his prescience, and men possess a kind of freedom, though exceedingly limited, which suffers them to act according to their thoughts.

I have now to shew that my hypothesis is not any way injurious or contradictory to the divine essence, and this I am able to prove.

The idea I have of God is that he is an omnipotent being, benevolent, infinite, and omni-

* The Basil edition reads—Nothing can be more inconsistent than to say we should be gods, if we were free. T.

scient. This God is determined in all things by the sublimest reasons; he does nothing which is not entirely reasonable and consistent. Nor does this in any manner overthrow the freedom of God; for God is reason itself, and, therefore, is certainly determined by reason; that is to say, he is determined by his will, which, in this sense, is nothing more than a play upon words. God can foresee his own acts, since they must be to all eternity subject to the excellence of his attributes, and must for ever bear the stamp of perfection. If, therefore, God is himself fate, how can he be the slave of fate? And, if this God, who, according to Clarke himself, cannot deceive himself, foresees the actions of men, we must own that they happen from necessity. This Mr. Clarke even confesses, though unintentionally. My reason is obliged to acknowledge that God, being excellence itself, can do nothing which is not most excellent. This is what all the works of nature attest, a fact to which the whole mass of men bear witness, and of the truth of which we should persuade ourselves, if we were the only existing beings.

We must, however, beware of judging the world by sections, which are but the members of one great whole, to which consistency is necessary;

cessary; for this would be to lose sight of the whole; it would be to consider a point in a work of miniature, and to neglect the effect produced by combination. We may take it for granted that all which we perceive in nature concurs to promote the views of the Creator. If our mole eyes be incapable of discovering these views, the defect is in our eyes, and not in the subject at which we look.

Such are the arguments my imagination has been able to furnish me with, concerning the romance of necessity.

I notwithstanding highly respect Cicero, the protector of freedom; though, to speak the truth, I take most pleasure in his Tusculan disputations. You ennoble the God of Clarke in such a manner that I already begin to feel some respect for the Deity. Had you lived in the days of Moses, you would have left a description of the God of Abraham which would have rendered him worthy of worship.

I shall defer speaking on your excellent essay on physics till some other opportunity; the work well deserves a letter dedicated to the discussion of that subject only. I shall be equally regardful of my engagements respecting the age of Louis the Great, and I shall add to that letter some considerations on the present state of the

the body politic in Europe. My intention was to have had these considerations printed in England, as an anonymous work, but have been prevented by particular reasons.

I am in expectation of your epistle on friendship, as of a work which shall crown every other. I am as hungry after your writings as you are diligent in their composition.

I was really much surprised to perceive that the marchioness du Chatelet thought so highly of my letter; I with Leibnitz endeavour to find an adequate cause, and am tempted to believe that her admiration originates in some small grain of indolence. She is not so liberal of her time as you are. I will immediately declare myself the rival of Newton; and, as is the mode at Paris, will write a libel against him; it will then depend on the marchioness to make peace between us. I willingly cede to Newton that preference which an old acquaintance and superior merit have acquired him, and I only request a few words, written in waste moments, in return for which I shall hold the marchioness quit of all admiration whatever.

I very unseasonably gave the alarm concerning Thiriot. Be kind enough to continue our correspondence by his intervention; for I shall then have your answers the sooner.

You

You cannot imagine how much I delight in your thoughts, and love the goodness of your heart. I am very much displeased to see myself the Saturn of the planetary system of which you are the sun. But what can be done? My sentiments bring me nearer to you, nor is the affection I have for you less fervent *. To this letter I add the particulars which you have asked me to send concerning the life of the czarina and the czarowitz. If you wish for any thing further command my services. I ever remain, &c.

L E T T E R LII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

April, 1738.

I HAVE received new favours from your royal highness, the precious fruits of your leisure, and your singular genius. Your *ode* † to the queen, your royal mother, appears to me to

* What is added is from the Basil edition. T.

† From what follows, in page 336, I suspect an error of the press here, and that it ought to be *epistle*. T.

be your best work. When the heart and mind unite the necessary result is a masterpiece. I find nothing to which to object, except some expressions which are not entirely conformable to our French nicety. We do not say *des encens* in the plural; nor do we say, as I believe is said in German, *encenser à quelqu'un* *. It is a phrase only used among some of the refugee clergy, who have rather corrupted the purity of the French tongue. This is nearly all my grammatical pedantry could find to criticise in that charming work, which, as a man, as a poet, and as a servant tenderly attached to your august person, I delight in.

How am I enchanted when I hear a prince, born to reign, say—

*Ta clémence et ton équité,
Ces limites de ta puissance †.*

These are lines which I should admire in the best poet, but which, coming from a prince, inspire rapture. You, like Marcus Aurelius, satirize courts by your example and by your writings; and you have the superior merit of reciting, in fine poetry and a foreign language, sen-

* To offer up incense or praise.

† Thy clemency and thy justice, those limits of thy power.

timents which he wrote, rather dryly, in his mother tongue.

If the respectable affection by which this ode was dictated had not wrested my first suffrage from me, I should have bestowed it upon the ode, which has more imagination; and the difficulties that are to be surmounted, a merit which never ought to be overlooked in the arts, are much greater in a regular ode than a free epistle.

The Spring is written in a very different manner: it is a picture by Claude Lorraine. There is an English poet of merit, named Thomson, who has written *The Seasons* in a similar taste, in blank verse without rhyme. It should seem you have both been inspired by the same muse.

Will your royal highness permit me to make a remark on this poem, which is but little poetical?

*Et dans le vaste cours de ses longs mouvements,
La terre gravitant et roulant sur ses flancs,
Approchant du soleil, en sa carrière immense —**

These are philosophical lines, and consequently they ought to conform to philosophy and truth. It is no Joshua who, in condescension

* Literally—And in the vast course of its long motions, the earth, gravitating and rolling on its sides, approaching the sun in its immense career— T.

to vulgar error, speaks in a truly vulgar style ; but a prince and disciple of Copernicus ; a prince of the country in which Copernicus was born, for I believe he was a native of Thorn, and I imagine your royal house may have some claims on Thorn.—But to the point ; and this point is, that the earth, from spring to summer, removes farther from the sun ; so that, at the middle of the sign Cancer, it is about a million of long German miles further from the sun than in the middle of winter ; and, in consequence of this inequality in its course, we have eight days more of summer than of winter.

I well know that it was long supposed we were nearest to the sun in summer ; but this was a great error. Nor ought it to appear singular that one thirty-third degree of greater proximity should not increase our heat ; for I have little more heat at the distance of thirty two than of thirty-three feet from my fire side. The heat therefore is not occasioned by the proximity of the sun, but by the perpendicularity of its rays, and their being refracted by the air on the earth in a greater quantity ; and the sun's rays are nearest to the perpendicular, and are most refracted, on our northern horizon, in summer, as your royal highness knows *.

I am

* The words of the original are so plain and positive
vol. vi. Z that

I am thus verbose to excuse the only criticism I have to make, nor can I pay your royal highness too many thanks for the honours you do our French Parnassus.

I send the fourth epistle by this packet ; the third is under correction. I should have sent the three new last acts of Merope, but they are now transcribing.

What your royal highness has deigned to send me concerning the czar Peter I. has effected a great change in my ideas. Is it possible that so many acts of horror could accompany plans which would have done honour to Alexander ? What ! At once to polish and to butcher his people ! Himself their executioner, abominable in the act, and legislator ! Descend from the throne to sully himself in guilt ! The creator of men, yet the dishonour of human nature ! Do you, great prince, who are the pride of mankind, as well in heart as in understanding, condescend to explain the enigma. I shall

that the author's meaning cannot have been mistaken ; though it is unfortunate for him that, while correcting the errors of the prince, he should have himself fallen into so palpable an error. Refraction has little connexion with the seasons, except in the extreme polar latitudes ; and, in direct contradiction to what he asserts, the greater the degree of obliquity, of cold, and of density, the greater is the refraction. The people near the pole see the sun for many days in the year, from this cause, when it is actually below the horizon. T.

wait

wait the memoirs which you shall have the goodness to communicate to me ; nor will I employ them but according to your orders. I will not continue the history of Louis XIV. or rather of his age, till you shall so command. I will not—
(The remainder is wanting.)

L E T T E R LIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Brussels, May, 1738.

RETURNING from those gloomy abodes, in the neighbourhood of which your royal highness has never been, I do myself the honour to write to you for my own consolation. I hope you will long continue to send me your orders to Brussels; I shall receive them much sooner, and with more certainty than when they make so many bounds and rebounds as on the route to Paris, Bar-le-duc, and Cirey : at least, I shall receive your commands immediately, with the hope that some day before I die *videbo dominum meum a facie ad faciem*.

Z 2

I take

I take the liberty to send your royal highness a short narrative, not of my travels, but of those of the Baron de Gangan*. It is a philosophical trifle, which should only be read, by way of relaxation from more serious labours, in company with the buffooneries of Harlequin. Can the enemy of Machiavel find time to travel with this Baron de Gangan? You will there find, however, a short article, full of truth, respecting things of this earth.

I mean soon to send you another tribute of poetical baubles, for I hold myself accountable for the manner in which I spend my time to my true sovereign. The goods of the subject, it is said, appertain to other kings; my heart and my hours are the right of mine.

Madame du Chatelet, your other subject, and the best ornament of your court, presents her respects, according to the permission which has been granted her. She is here wholly absorbed in law, for she finds few persons with whom she can converse on philosophy. Neither the arts nor the pleasures have taken up their abode at Brussels. A retired and peaceful life is here the lot of most individuals, but their tranquillity is so like, that it may easily be mistaken for,

* This work has never been known, at least not by that title.

languor. This quality, this languor, does not approach the house where Emily dwells, and which is honoured by the letters of our prince. We live in the most retired part of the town, in the street of the Great Tower. Here we daily converse of the prince who is born to be beloved by the whole earth, as he is by us, by the Baron von Kayserling, so worthy to please and to enjoy his presence, and by the learned Jordan, whose happiness I envy.

I am with the most profound respect, and the tenderest gratitude, &c.

LETTER LIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

Cirey, May 20, 1738.

YOUR post-days resemble the days of Titus; you would weep if your letters were not so many benefits. Your two last, of the 31st of March and 19th of April, with which I have been honoured by your royal highness, are new bonds of attachment; and it is necessary that

Z 3

each

each of my answers should contain a renewal of the oath of fidelity, which my soul, your subject, takes to your soul, her sovereign.

The first thing on which I feel myself obliged to speak is the manner in which you think on Machiavel. How could you forbear being actuated by that virtuous anger which you almost felt against me, because I praised the style of this bad man? The two Borgias, father and son, and all such petty princes, who had need of crimes to elevate themselves, found it necessary to study his infernal politics, which, by a prince like you, cannot but be detested. These politics, which we may rank with the art of Locusta and Brinvilliers *, were able to acquire a temporary power for some tyrants, like as poison may procure an estate; but they never form either great or happy men. This is indisputable; therefore, to what good purposes can such a dreadful system be applied? To effect its own destruction and the destruction of others. These are truths which form the catechism of your fine understanding.

* A marchioness, executed at Paris in 1676, of intolerable depravity. She poisoned her father and her two brothers; and, previous to this application of her poisons, she made trial of them on poor persons, and on the sick at the hospital called *l'Hotel Dieu*. T.

I am

I am so convinced of these sentiments, which with you are innate, and the result of which must be the happiness of mankind, that I had almost forgotten to return thanks to your royal highness, for the kind interest you have taken in my individual sufferings. But ought not the love of the public good to precede all things? And, sir, you condescend, among so many other benefits, to add that of consulting physicians concerning my health! I know but one thing which, in singularity, equals this your goodness, and that thing is the physicians have told you truth. I have long been persuaded that my disease, if I may be permitted to compare evil with good, is like my attachment to your person, an affair for life.

The consolation which I enjoy in my delicious retirement, and in the honour of your letters, are sufficiently powerful to make me support much greater afflictions. I suffer most patiently; and, though my pains are sometimes continued and acute, I am very far from thinking myself unhappy. Not that I am a stoic; on the contrary, I am very much of an epicurean, for I believe pain to be an evil, and pleasure a good; but, after having drawn a just balance, I find infinitely more pleasures than pains in this life.

From this short chapter on morality, I shall pursue your flight, if your royal highness will grant me your permission, into the abyss of metaphysics. A mind so just as yours, certainly, cannot regard the question of freedom as a thing demonstrated. The delight you have in order, and in perceiving ideas in a train, is strongly pictured. God to you is the sole and infinite master of all; and this opinion, singly considered, without recurring to ourselves, seems to be a fundamental principle, whence inevitable necessity and all the operations of nature, are deduced. But another manner of reasoning seems again to give God more power; and, if I may venture so to say, to make him a being more worthy of our adoration. This is to attribute to him the capability of creating free beings. The first method apparently makes him the God of machines, and the second the God of thinking creatures. Each of these methods has its strong and weak side; you weigh them in the balance of the sage; and in despite of the great preponderance which Leibnitz and Wolf bring into the scale, you still make the saying of Montagne your motto—*Que fais-je ?**

I perceive, more than ever, from the memoirs

* What know I?

on the Czarovitz, which your royal highness has deigned to send me, that history, as well as metaphysics, has its scepticism. I have been careful, in the age of Louis XIV. not to penetrate farther than was necessary into the private cabinet of the prince. I have regarded the great events of his reign as beautiful phenomena, which I took care to notice without inquiring into their cause. First causes are seldom known by the philosopher, and the origin of cabal is as seldom known by the historian. To paint men and manners, to write the history of the human mind, in this glorious period, and especially the history of the arts, have constituted my sole object. I am very certain I shall speak truth when I speak of Descartes, of Corneille, of Pouffin, of Girardon, and of the useful establishments which have been formed. I am as certain I shall speak falsehood if I attempt to relate the private conversations of Louis XIV. and Madame de Maintenon.

Should you deign to encourage me in my career, I shall proceed with still additional ardour. However, in the mean time, I shall appropriate the remainder of this year to physics, and especially to experimental philosophy. I am informed, by all the vehicles of public intelligence, that my elements of Newton are on sale; but
I have

I have never yet seen a copy. It is pleasant to recollect that the author and the person to whom they are addressed are the only people who have not the work. The Dutch booksellers have been in haste, without consulting me, or waiting for the corrections I was preparing. They have neither sent me the book nor informed me of its publication. For this reason I cannot do myself the honour of remitting a copy to your royal highness, but I will be careful to send one from a new and more correct edition, now in the press.

It seems, sir, that this little *commercium epistolicum* embraces the whole circle of the arts. I have taken the liberty of speaking to you of ethics, metaphysics, history, and philosophy, and I should be very ungrateful were I to forget poetry. How can I forget the last verses which your royal highness has just sent me? It is very astonishing that you should be able to write with so much facility in a foreign language. To write French poetry is very difficult, in France; yet you write it, at Remusberg, as if Chaulieu, Chapelle, and Gresset, had enjoyed the honour of supping with your royal highness.

[The rest is wanting.]

L E T-

L E T T E R LV.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

May, 1738.

THIS title is due to you as well because of your uncommon merit as of the sincerity with which you point out my faults. I am charmed with your criticism. I write as it were under your inspection. Your information and remarks, like the pipes which convey water to the fountain, shall regulate the elasticity of my mind; and the more severe your criticism shall be the more will you add to the obligations I am under.

Your fourth epistle is a chef-d'œuvre; I and Cefario have read it again and again, and again and again have admired. I cannot express the esteem in which I hold your works; the noble freedom with which you speak great truths enchants me.

*Au bord de l'infini ton cours doit s'arrêter.**

This perhaps is the most philosophic line which

* At the brink of infinitude thy course must stop.

has

has ever been written ; the pride of most of the learned is incapable of bending before this truth. Every resource of philosophy (or argument) must have been exhausted by you before it could have been discovered.

You have a peculiar talent for expressing great sentiments and great truths ; I am charmed with the two following lines——

*O divine amitié, félicité parfaite,
Seul mouvement de l'ame où l'exès soit permis ! **

I wish for the power to inculcate this truth in the hearts of all my countrymen, and of all mankind. Did all men think thus, we should behold a more perfect and a more happy republic than that of Plato.

The present season, which by me is devoted to Mars, has furnished me with so many occupations that I have not been able to answer you sooner ; I have received the fifth epistle on happiness, and I reply to all these letters at once.

To speak with my customary frankness, I will freely confess that all which relates to the *man* God does not please me, in the mouth of a philosopher, one who ought to be above popular

* Oh divine friendship, perfection of felicity ! Thine are the only emotions of the soul in which excess is good !

errors.* Leave to the great Corneille, become a dotard, the insipid labour of turning *the imitation of Jesus Christ* into rhyme, and when you speak to us speak in your own person. We may talk of fables, but only as fables; and I think it will be best to be entirely dumb concerning christian fables, canonized by their antiquity, and by the credulity of absurd and stupid people.

I would only permit some fragment of the history of this pretended Saviour to be represented on the stage; but in your fifth epistle it appears that your too great condescension for the Jesuits, or the priesthood, has determined you to speak in the tone you there assume.

You will perceive, sir, I am sincere; I may be in an error, but I never can disguise my thoughts from you.

Cesario received the letter you have written to him with joy and transport; you will find his answer under the same cover that includes this. We are soon to be separated for a time, for I am to attend the king into the country of Cleves, where I expect to be next month. Have the goodness to address your letters, about this time,

* The verses alluded to are in the "Discourse on Virtue," and begin thus—*Quand l'ennemi divin des scribes et des prêtres,*

to colonel Borck, at Wesel. I hope I shall receive some during the abode I shall make there, especially because of my then greater proximity to France. I shall turn my face toward Cirey, in imitation of the Jewish captives at Babylon, who turned toward the temple to offer up their prayers, and to implore the divine aid.

Here are some pieces of my scribbling which I send to the crucible*. I greatly fear they will not bear the proof. You will perceive how incessantly I am haunted by the demon of rhyming. I may soon perhaps be possessed by the demon of war, and should fate, or this fiend, make me the enemy of the French, be well persuaded that hatred will never obtain any power over my mind, and that my heart will continually belie my arm. You alone, sir, make me love your nation; I should tenderly cherish the remembrance of the inhabitants of Cirey, although I should make war on France, and should say,

—————Mon épée

Qui du sang espagnol eut été mieux trempée—†

I intreat you will write to me as often as possible. I am extremely uneasy concerning your

* *Le philosophe guerrier*; or the philosophic warrior; an epistle to M. Jordan, and another to Cesarion.

† Much rather had my sword in Spanish blood be steeped.
health.

health. We have lately lost one of the greatest men in Germany; the famous M. de Beaufobre, a man of honour, probity, and genius; of an acute discerning mind, a great orator, well read in church history and literature, an implacable enemy of the Jesuits, the best writer in Berlin, and one whose fire and vivacity not the great age of eighty could freeze. His defect was a small inclination toward superstition, which is common enough among divines; nor was he insensible of the worth of his talents, or deaf to applause and praise. The loss to me is the greater because it is irreparable. We have no person as the substitute of M. de Beaufobre; men of his merit are rare; and, when nature plants such fruit, it does not always come to maturity.

I have got possession of a letter which was written to you by a lady of this country. You must have perceived, by her style, that she and common sense have quarreled. Do not estimate all the Prussian ladies by this specimen; believe me there are some whose understandings and persons you would not think deserving of reproof. In gratitude I owe them some small defence, for they impart inexpressible charms to the intercourse of life. Gallantry out of the question, they are indispensably necessary in society, for without them conversation is languid.

I am

I am in expectation of Merope, and of some other new-blown beauty, as I am of letters from my friend, and of an answer to some trifles which I sent off to the little paradise of Cirey; and I languish during this state of suspense. I forgot to inform you that I have received your Newton; I speak of the Dutch edition. I promised to communicate all my reflections to you, but how may I perform this promise? For a month past I have not had a moment to recollect myself in; and scarcely have I been able to write these few words.

A thousand expressions of friendship to the marchioness, and to all those whom the name of Voltaire has assembled at Cirey. Let me intreat you would not forget me, but that you will remain firmly convinced of the esteem and friendship, &c.

L E T T E R LVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Louvain, May 30th, 1738.

AT leaving Brussels I received every thing which could gratify my mind and cure my body, for all of which I am indebted to
your

your royal highness. *Deus nobis hæc munera fecit.* You are determined I should live, sir, and I will venture to say you are right so to determine, and not to suffer the most affectionate of your admirers, the faithful witness of what passes in your fine understanding, to perish so soon. I and the *Henriade* are indebted to you for life. I am much more honoured than Virgil was; Augustus did not write verses for Virgil till after the death of his poet: but your royal highness bids yours respire, and deigns to honour the *Henriade* with a preface written by your own hand. What need, sir, have I of the wretched protection of a cardinal whom fortune has rendered powerful? What need have I of other aid than yours? Would to God I might be permitted to live a hermit in the county of Loo, whither I now follow Emily!

We arrived at Bruffels the day before yesterday. We are now on our journey, and it will be some days before I shall begin to enjoy a little leisure. Whenever this shall happen, I shall arrange and send a few things which may afford a temporary amusement to my protector, while he is occupied in writing his excellent work, so worthy of a prince like himself, and who, while he condescends to write against Machiavel, resembles Apollo extirpat-

ing the serpent Python. You, certainly, sir, are my Apollo, for to me you are both the god of physic and poetry ; nay, you are Bacchus too, for your royal highness is pleased to send good wine to Emily and her patient. Will you be so obliging, sir, as to order this bacchanalian present to be directed to a most worthy favourite of Bacchus, the duke d'Arenberg ? Wine ought always to be addressed to him, as every literary work should be to you. There are certain ceremonies to which wine is subjected at Brussels, and from which he will protect us. I hope, in his company, to drink to the health of my dear sovereign, the real master of my soul, and whose subject I more effectually am than of the monarch in whose kingdom I was born.

We must be gone : I conclude a letter which the prattling of my overflowing heart would forbid me to end so soon. When I am at my journey's end, I will give the rein to my thanks, and the worthy Emily will have the honour of adding a few lines for herself. I will then make oath of obedience to the physician whose opinion your royal highness has had the goodness to send me. I will write to your amiable favourite, the baron von Kayserling ; in fine, I will fulfil every duty of affection. Behold me
at

at your feet, great prince ! *O et præsidium et dulce decus meum !*

I am on the wing, but with the most unshaken sentiments of respect, admiration, and tender gratitude, &c.

LETTER LVII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

June, 1738.

I HAVE received a part of the new favours with which I am loaded by your royal highness. M. Thiriot has remitted me the packet in which I find *Le Philosophe Guerrier*, and the epistles of M. von Kayserling and Jordan. You march with giant strides, while I feebly creep. I have only a poor epistle to send, *oportet illum crescere, me autem minui.*

With how much ardour you pursue
That fame which still you keep in view !
When you shall march to dang'rous war,
Proud conquest shall attend your car ;
Then shall your muse, in lofty verse,
The victories you have won rehearse,
While men and gods admiring view
Hector and Homer join'd, in you !

A a 2

Your

Your martial spirit France shall deem
 A high, an honourable theme.
 The double meed Fate you decrees
 At once to conquer us and please.

One of the first military exploits which I shall supplicate from your royal highness will be to come and retake Cirey, which has been very unjustly detached from Remusberg, to which it appertains by right.—Never give up Cirey : when you shall make peace, restore Strasbourg and Metz if you please, but I conjure you, sir, preserve your Cirey ; and take particular care that no cannon ball be suffered to damage the stuccoed walls, the gilded wainscots, and the charming closets and cabinets of Emily. I suspect there is a standish upon the road for her. That with which you have honoured M. Jordan will soon be productive of excellent works ; were it to any other person, I should have said of this standish coming from you, what a certain Turk said to Scanderbeg : “ You have sent me your sabre, but you have not sent me your arm.”

Your epistle to Jordan is true pleasantry ; that to Cesarion is worthy of your heart and understanding. The Philosophic Warrior perfectly corresponds to its title ; it is full of imagination and of reason. Let me intreat you, sir, to remark that the faults which you commit against
 our

our language and versification are but trifling.
For example, after thus beautifully beginning,

Loin de ce séjour solitaire,
Ou, sous les auspices charmans
De l'amitié, tendre et sincère, &c *,

You add—

La science non d'orgueil enflée †.

You could not divine that *science* is here a word of three syllables, and that the *non* after *science* sounds somewhat harshly. Such would be the remark of a grammarian of the French academy; but you possess that to which our present academicians are strangers; you possess genius.

Pardon my freedom, but are you yourself aware of the beauty of the following lines?

Et le trépas, qui nous poursuit,
Sous nos pas creuse notre tombe.
L'homme est une ombre, qui s'enfuit;
Une fleur, qui se fane et tombe.
Mille chemins nous font ouverts,
Pour quitter ce triste univers;
Mais la nature, si féconde,
N'en fit qu'un pour entrer au monde ‡.

Nature

* Far from this solitary abode, where, under the delightful auspices of sincere and tender friendship, &c.

† Not the science of inflated pride.

‡ From death's pursuit no art can save;
Beneath our feet he digs our grave.

Nature has made but one Frederic. Oh, that his life might be as lasting as his name !

I make oath to your royal highness that, as soon as you shall have recovered possession of the castle of Cirey, there shall be no more of that dull sermonizing concerning which you so heroically reproach me. But Socrates occasionally sacrificed with the Greeks. True it is this did not save his life, but it might save the petty *Socratines* of the present day : *felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum*. There was once a fine young lion, who proudly passed an ass which had been laden and beaten by his master. Art thou not ashamed, said the lion to the ass, to suffer any one to place two panniers upon thy back ? My lord, replied the ass, when I shall be an honourable lion, I will take care that my master shall carry the panniers.

Ass as I am, I herewith send an epistle the sentiments of which are tolerably firm. I should be glad to know what a person like Wolf would think of it, if *sapientissimus Wolfius* be capable of reading French poetry ; I should be glad to

Man is a fleeting shade, a flow'r,
That blooms and withers in an hour.
High roads by thousands open lie,
To quit life's gloomy stage, and die ;
Though fruitful nature yields but one,
By which the actor can come on.

hear

hear the opinion of a Jordan, who, I imagine, will be the worthy successor of M. de Beau-sobre; especially of one Cefario; and thrice especially of your royal highness; of you, sir, who, a great prince and a great man, unite in yourself all the talents of the foregoing.

Your royal highness has, no doubt, read the excellent work of M. de Maupertuis. A man like him, when opportunity shall serve, might found an academy of sciences, at Berlin, which should rise superior to that of Paris.

I have received a letter from the baron von Kayserling, the Hæphestion of Remusberg. You, great prince, possess what those who are what you hereafter shall be want; you possess true friends.

I am astonished to see, by the letter of your royal highness, which is undated, that you have not received the four acts of Merope, accompanied by a tolerably long letter; for it is six weeks since M. Thiriot acknowledged the receipt of the packet, and since he ought to have put it in the post. There have been some trifling interruptions in the intercourse, which, to my honour, has subsisted between us. I mean soon to send your royal highness a copy of a more correct edition of the elements of Newton. You, sir, are the only person on earth

A a 4

who

who is capable of combining all this with the multitude of your occupations and your duties.

Madame du Chatelet never ceases thinking on you with admiration—and with regret. You have bestowed a high title on me which I never can merit, though my heart makes every effort for that purpose. A man, who had been loved by the famous sir Philip Sidney, ordered that, after his death, instead of his name, they should write upon his tomb—*HERE LIES THE FRIEND OF SIDNEY*. My tomb never can have such an honour; there are no means of saying *the friend of* ———

I am with the most profound veneration, and that devoted affection in which you deign to indulge me, &c.

L E T T E R LVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Amatte, June 17, 1738 *.

TO receive doubts, which I have sent concerning your own works, as you have done,

* No place named, and dated June 18th, in the Berlin edition.

is a mark of very superior genius. Machiavel is henceforth erased from the list of great men, and your pen regrets it has sullied itself with his name. The abbé Dubos, in his parallel between poetry and painting, cites the Italian politician among the great men whom Italy has produced, since the revival of the arts and sciences ; but he certainly deceives himself, and I could wish the political empiric might be blotted from the number of those of whom your name ought to stand the first.

I earnestly request you will continue the history of the age of Louis the Great. Europe has never seen such a history, and I dare venture to assure you the world has no idea of a work so perfect as that which you have begun. I have even reasons which appear to me more pressing still, and which induce me to beg you will finish the work. Your experimental philosophy makes me tremble ; I am afraid of quicksilver, I dread the laboratory, and all those effects which are the consequence of experiments, and which are so prejudicial to health. Nor shall I persuade myself you have the least friendship for me, if you will not be careful of yourself.

Madame du Chatelet, indeed, ought to be very watchful. Were I in her place, I would impose

impose tasks so agreeable upon you that I would teach you to forget your experiments. You support pain like a philosopher; and, indeed, were we not to omit the good when we are enumerating the evil we suffer in this world, we should continually find that we are not so exceedingly unhappy. A great part of our ills consists in the fertility of our own fancy, and a small tincture of spleen.

I have so totally exhausted myself, in my metaphysics, that I find it impossible to add any thing more. Each man endeavours to divine the hidden springs of nature; and may not philosophers all happen to be deceived? There are as many different systems as there are philosophers. Each of these systems has a degree of probability; yet each is contradictory to the other. The Malabar Indians have calculated the revolutions of the celestial bodies, on the supposition that the sun turns round a great mountain in their country; and their calculations are just. Let men remember this, and afterward vaunt of the prodigious efforts of human reason, and the vast depth of human knowledge.

Man is really acquainted with only few things; but, such is the pride of his mind, he wishes to be acquainted with all. Formerly metaphysics
appeared

appeared to me a country in which great discoveries might be made ; it now only presents an ocean to my view, famous for its shipwrecks.

*Jeune j'aimois Ovide, à présent c'est Horace *.*

BOILEAU.

Metaphysics, like a quack, promises largely ; but experience teaches us the quack never performs his promise. After having observed much, whether in studying the sciences or the minds of men, we naturally incline to scepticism ; and *the wish to be deeply informed often teaches us to doubt*. From all I can learn, the Newtonian philosophy came to hand with me sooner than with its author. I thought the title appeared singular enough ; and, as I conjecture, the book was indebted for it to the liberality of the bookseller. An able algebraist of Berlin has spoken to me of some trifling errors of calculation, but in other respects the men of science have been delighted. For my own part, judging, as I do, without any great knowledge of such subjects, I shall some day request explanations from you concerning the vacuum, which appears to me very marvellous and incomprehensible ; also on the flux and reflux

* Ovid my favourite once, 'tis Horace now.

of the sea, occasioned by attraction; on the reason of colours, &c. I shall question you as a ploughman would, were you to undertake to give him instruction, on such subjects, and you will be obliged to take some trouble to convince me.

I do not deny having perceived some striking truths in Newton; but are there not principles, which are too much extended? In a word, do we not find fillagree work intermingled with the Tuscan columns. As soon as I shall return from my journey, I will acquaint you with all my doubts: recollect that,

And onward were they led to truth by doubt.

I have just read the three last acts of *Merope*, and can affirm that hatred and envy combined could not at present find fault with that admirable work. I do not speak thus because you have paid attention to my criticism, nor am I blinded by friendship. It is truth; it is because *Merope* is without blemish. All the rules of probability are observed, and all the incidents are well prepared. The character of a tender mother, betrayed by that very tenderness, is worth all the originals of Vandyke. *Poliphontes* at present preserves a perfect unity of character; all he says corre-
sponds

sponds to that character, which is that of a suspicious tyrant. In the councils of Narbas is all the usual timidity of old age, and his remaining upon the stage is natural. Ægisthus speaks as Voltaire would speak, were he so situated; his heart is too noble to be guilty of meanness; he possesses courage to revenge the manes of his father; and he is equally modest after success and grateful toward his benefactors.

May a German, an Ultramontane, be permitted to make a trifling grammatical remark on the two last lines in the piece?—*O tempora, O mores!* A Bæotian stands forth to accuse Demosthenes of a solecism.—The following are the lines in question.

Allons, monter au trône, en y plaçant ma mère :

*Et vous, mon cher Narbas, soyez toujours mon père *.*

Do you mean by the words—*Et vous, mon cher Narbas*—to place Narbas on the throne along with Ægisthus and his mother? Or do you mean that Narbas is continually to act as his father? Could not you read thus :

Allons, monter au trône, et plaçons y ma mère ;

Pour vous, mon cher Narbas, soyez toujours mon père.

* Let us ascend the throne, and place my mother there ; and do you, dear Narbas, ever be to me as a father.

Am not I exceedingly impertinent, and do not I deserve to be disgracefully expelled the French Parnassus? Nothing but the interest I take in the fame of my friend could make me guilty of such incongruities. Correct me, I beseech you, and shew me my error. You will say that the words *placons y* are not sufficiently harmonious—I own it; but they are more intelligible.

Here is my political essay, such as I intend to have it printed. I hope you will not suffer it to escape out of your possession, for you will easily comprehend the consequences. I beg you will tell me your general opinion of it, without entering into any minute examination. A memorial is wanting, which I shall soon have, and which you can at any time add.

The memoirs of the academy, which I have sent for, will be my summer's and autumnal task. I follow you at a distance in my labours, like as the tortoise creeps along the track of the stag.

The young man who is the author of the allegory, delighted by your approbation, feels an increase of poetical ardor. He has already produced a new specimen, as you may perceive. The name of Voltaire alone induces us to write, such writers as we are; it is not our divine ardor

dor which brings down Apollo from Olympus ; it is you who inspire us.

The Merope of Maffei is on the road, and should soon arrive. The packet of which you have had notice, and which the substitute of Tronchin has not sent you, contains a trifle for the marchioness ; a piece of furniture for her *boudoir* *. I beg you will assure her that all those who are capable of loving you inspire me with esteem. Cesario seems to me a little smitten by the marchioness. Speaking of her, he said to me—*When she conversed, I was enamoured of her understanding ; and of her person, when she was silent.*—Happy the eyes that have seen, and the ears that have heard her ! Still happier those who know Voltaire, and who daily enjoy his society.

You cannot imagine the impatience I feel to see you ; I am horribly weary of only being acquainted with you by the eye of faith ; I wish the eye of the flesh should also be gratified. If you ever should be carried off, take it for granted I shall act the part of Paris.

Persuade yourself of the sentiments with which I am your most faithful friend.

* A small chamber.

L E T T E R LIX.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

June, 1738.

WHEN I received the new benefit your royal highness has conferred on me, I immediately thought of preparing new tribute; for, when a monarch enriches his subjects, their taxes ought consequently to be increased. But it will be impossible, sir, for me to acquit myself of all my debts. The last product of your labour is the work of a true sage, who is much superior to philosophers. Your mind is the better enabled to doubt by its capability of research.

Nothing, sir, is more certain than that we are under the direction of a power as invisible as it is strange in this world. So chickens are for a certain time put into pens, that they may afterward be brought to the spit; but they never can comprehend what was the whim of the poulterer for having cooped them up thus. I will wager that, if these chickens were to reason, and form a system from their cage, not one of them would divine that they were thus treated in order to be eaten.

Your

Your royal highness may well laugh at the biped animals who imagine they are acquainted with all things. A fool's cap should be placed upon that learned head which supposes it can explain what are duration, coherence, first cause, and electricity; what produces seed, feeling, hunger, and digestion; in fine, which believes it understands matter, and, what is still more ridiculous, mind. A certain degree of knowledge is granted to man; we can measure, calculate, and weigh to a certain point. Mathematical truths are indubitable, which is much. We know beyond doubt that the moon is less than the earth; that the planets perform their courses according to a given proportion; that there cannot be less than thirty millions of leagues, each of three thousand paces, between the earth and the sun; we can predict eclipses, &c. To pretend to more is temerity; it is not intended that the bottom cards in the pack should be seen.

I imagine systematic philosophers resemble curious travellers, who, having taken the dimensions of the seraglio of the Grand Turk, and who perhaps might have seen some of the apartments, presume thence to divine how often his highness has embraced his favourite sultana, or his ganymede, the preceding night.

Yet your royal highness, for a German prince in duty bound to protect the system of Copernicus, appears to me very sceptical. This is like ceding one of your provinces for the love of peace, and which I would beg leave to remind you is only consented to as a last resort. I, an insignificant Frenchman, place the planetary system of Copernicus in the rank of mathematical truths; nor do I think it can ever be destroyed by the mountain of Malabar.

I pay every honour due to these good gentlemen of Malabar, but I believe them to be very poor philosophers. The Chinese, compared to whom the Indians of Malabar scarcely are men, are very bad astronomers; the most insignificant jesuit, among them, is a towering eagle. The mathematical tribunal of China, in defiance of its formal bows and pointed beards, is a wretched college of ignorant persons, who predict rain and fair weather, but who are unable exactly to calculate an eclipse. I will grant that the barbarians of Malabar have a mountain in the form of a sugar-loaf, which serves them as a gnomon; their mountain is undoubtedly of use to teach them the equinoxes, the solstices, the rising and the setting of the sun and the stars, the division of time into hours, the aspects of the planets, and the phases of the moon.

moon. A ball at the end of a stick would perform the same office for us in the open fields; nor would the system of Copernicus be thereby injured.

I take the liberty to send your royal highness my *system of pleasure*. I am no sceptic on this subject; for, since I have been at Cirey, and have been honoured by the bounties of your royal highness, I believe pleasure to be demonstrated.

I am astonished that, among so many perplexed demonstrations of the existence of God, no one ever thought of bringing pleasure as a proof; for, physically speaking, pleasure is divine; and I hold that every man who drinks excellent Tokay, embraces a charming woman, and who, in a word, feels agreeable sensations, must acknowledge a supreme and beneficent being. It was for this reason that the ancients made deities of all the passions; and, as all the passions are given us for our welfare, according to my doctrine, they prove the unity of a God, for they prove a unity of design. Will your royal highness permit me to consecrate this epistle to him whom God formed to render mankind happy, and to him whose goodness is my happiness and my glory? Madame du Chatelet participates in these sentiments. I am,

B b 2

with

with most profound respect, and unbounded devotion, &c.

LETTER LX.

From the Prince Royal.

SIR,

Wesel, July 24th, 1738 *.

I AM now more than sixty leagues nearer Cirey, and I seem as if I had but another step to take, and to be there; yet I know not what invisible power prevents my arrival. You cannot conceive how much I suffer; or the inquietude I feel, knowing myself so near, to see myself incapable of enjoying your conversation.

I have passed through a country, where, certainly, nature has neglected nothing to render the lands fertile, and the fields as pleasant as possible; but it should seem as if she had exhausted herself in the formation of plants, hedges, and rivulets, which embellish each landscape, and that she wanted sufficient force for the improvement of our species. I have seen the greatest part of Westphalia, which lay in our way, and must own, if God thought proper to

* July 21st. in the Berlin edition.

breathe his divine spirit into man, the portion allotted to these people was certainly very small; nay so small that it may well be made a question whether the beings we there see, in the form of man, do think or do not. I suspend my judgment for the love of humanity, and from the fear that you should impute whatever I should say on this subject to detraction.

I enquire after you, of all persons who come from Holland, and they all tell me of the infamous libels with which you are persecuted by your countrymen; and of the ingratitude of your nation, which suffers a man who is an honour to this nation, and who hereafter shall render the age in which he lived illustrious, to be loaded with opprobrium.

I supported your cause at Brunswick, against one Botmer *, a lively, thoughtless, would-be-wit, who when he wants arguments resorts to affirmation, and obliged him to confess, in the presence of twenty people, that the judgment which he had pronounced on you was grossly erroneous, and that he was incapable of understanding all the beauties of your works.

You perceive, sir, I every where make proselytes; and that I wish to gain you some even at Paris, in despite of France, and to make

* The Basil edition reads *Bomer*.

your nation feel, judging as it does from levity or caprice, that its eyes have been hood-winked, and that jealousy and envy are a kind of fog, which darken and conceal from the envious the merit of their adversaries.

I expect to meet du Breuil Tronchin here, to take measures with him concerning our correspondence. I believe, however, I have found a shorter road through Aix, where I have a wine merchant named Logni, whose correspondents are chiefly in Champagne; and, provided you shall think proper to trust a certain person of the name of Geoffroi, who lives at Epernay, I believe our intercourse may be very much accelerated by this new channel.

I am in perpetual motion here, and am kept active, very active. Perhaps I am fated to sin in extremes: in a few weeks, contemplation will have its turn.

Thiriot has sent me your letter to Maffei, and your other letter on the work of M. Dutot, which are, each in its kind, masterpieces. You speak of poetry like Horace, and of the art of rendering men happy like * * * *, or like Agrippa.

If such a thing may be, bring your meridian nearer ours; it should seem that fate, envious
of

of my happiness, ordained that Cirey should be so far from Remusberg.

By system yet unknown, with plastic touch,
Let some philosopher new mould old earth ;
Sink hill and valley, river, lake, and sea ;
All obstacles remove that our abodes divide.

I should be very glad M. de Maupertuis could do me this kindness. I would more willingly own myself in his debt for this than for his voyage to Greenland, or all he learned from the Laplanders. I am with much esteem, &c.

L E T T E R LXI.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Loo, in Holland,
Aug. 6, 1738.

I PERCEIVE the true picture of your mind, and of my own, in the beautiful epistle on man, which I have just received, and for which I return you a thousand thanks. Thus a great man ought to think, and these thoughts are as worthy of you as the conquest of the world was of Alexander. You modestly seek truth, and boldly publish it when found. I am

B b 4

convinced

convinced there can be but one God and one Voltaire in nature : it is impossible this nature, so fertile in other respects, can copy her work, or produce your equal.

There are none but great truths in your epistle on man ; you never are more sublime than when you determine to be yourself. Acknowledge with me, my dear friend, that each man ought to be himself ; and you have so many reasons to be satisfied, with your manner of thinking, that you never should condescend to borrow the thoughts of others.

Let monks in their obscure cloisters bury their miserable theology in their own mean dirt, and may our descendants remain for ever ignorant of the puerile follies of faith, and of the ceremonious worship of priests and friars ! The blooming flowers of poetry are prostituted when they are made to bedeck and ornament error ; and the pencil which is able to paint men ought to efface the figures of jesuits.

I am infinitely obliged to you for the pains you have taken to correct my faults : I pay strict attention to all those which you point out, and hope to render myself more and more worthy of my friend, and my master, in the art of thinking and writing.

Draw no comparison, I beseech you, between
your

your works and mine. You march with a firm step along difficult roads; whereas I creep in beaten paths. As soon as I return home, which perhaps will be at the end of this month, Cesarion and Jordan will fly to your epistle on man, and I guarantee their plaudits. As to the *sapientissimus Wolfus*, I am wholly unacquainted with him, having neither written nor spoken to him, and I believe, like you, that he has but little knowledge of the French language.

Your imagination, my dear friend, renders you a conqueror at a cheap rate; therefore, be persuaded we are under every obligation to your generosity. If ever, in my life, I should go to Cirey, it certainly would not be to form a siege. Your eloquence, more powerful than the destructive implements of Jericho, would cause the weapons of war to drop from my hands. I have no other claims over Cirey than those which I may assert over gratitude, for the disinterestedness of my friendship. Like another Jason, I shall carry off the fleece; but I shall carry off at the same time the dragon which guards the fleece. Let the marchioness beware!

At least, madam, you will not fall into the hands of pirates: a generous conqueror, I will divide with you, with your good permission,
that

that Voltaire whom you wish solely to possess.

I revert to you, my dear friend : Returning from my conquests, it is but just that I should enjoy winter quarters, which will be prepared for me by M. de Maupertuis. Your ideas relative to him are excellent. I could have wished that you had added to what you wrote to me—*And we will partake this care between us.* M. Thiriot tells me of a new edition of your Newtonian philosophy, for which, till I have received it, I will reserve my thanks. I know not how my letters are employed, but they ought to be cruelly weary on the road. They must certainly meet with some delay, for it is two months since the ink-stand for Emily was sent. The large packet was to pass through Lunceville, and I am in hopes that you have received it before this.

I write from a place which formerly was the residence of a great man, and which is at present the abode of the prince of Orange. The demon of ambition sheds his destructive venom over his days ; this prince, who might be the most fortunate of men, is preyed upon by chagrin, in his noble palace, and in the midst of his gardens and splendid courtiers. This is really a pity ; for, in other respects, the prince
has

has infinite wit, and various high qualities. I conversed much, on Newton, with the princess; and from Newton we proceeded to Leibnitz, and to the late queen of England, who, according to what the prince has told me, was of the opinion of Clarke.

I heard at this court that s'Gravefande had not spoken of your translation of Newton in such a manner as I could have wished. Good God!—Shall sensibility of heart never be united with grandeur, riches, wit, and knowledge?

I have received no letters during my whole journey, notwithstanding the precautions I took; and I know not what is become of our ruinous Parnassus of Berlin. Jordan will be two inches higher when he shall hear of the place of which you think him worthy. Your letter is a sugar plumb, which I shall give him on my return. Could my pen write all my heart thinks my letter would never end.

*Le secret d'ennuyer est celui de tout dire *.*

I shall say but little, my dear friend, and that little is—think sometimes of me, when you have nothing better to think of; for I would not be the loss of one excellent thought.

* The art to be dull is to say all we think.

B

My

My compliments to the marchioness; I am so disturbed here that I am not myself. Love me a little, for I am very affectionate, and do not doubt of the sentiments of esteem with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R LXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Cirey, August 5, 1738.

I HAVE received the most beautiful and permanent of the favours of your royal highness. Your political work is at length arrived. Indeed I suspected that he who was so successful in our arts would be very superior in his own. I was astonished to perceive in you so sage and so sublime a metaphysician, and so amiable a poet; but I am not so to see you write like a great prince, and a true politician. It is but just that your royal highness should understand your trade. Woe to them who are better acquainted with other professions than their own. I am about to speak vainly; I believe that, had these *Considerations on the present state of the body politic in Europe* been printed under the name of
a member

a member of the British parliament, I should have discovered your royal highness; and should have said I here see the great prince concealed under the great citizen.

In this work, which is worthy of its author, there is a predominant style which discovers you; and I there perceive I know not what air of a member of the Empire which an English citizen seldom attains: a member of the house of Lords or Commons is less interested in Germanic freedom. There is likewise a small trait of the good Leibnitz philosophy which bears your signet. *Nothing, say you, is without its adequate cause*; and I imagine, from this single phrase, I should have exclaimed, here is my philosophic prince; I have him; it can be no other! But I should most certainly have known you by the grandeur and humanity of your mind; for such is the predominant colouring in all your pictures.

The marchioness du Chatelet and I have repeatedly read the excellent and instructive work with which your royal highness has deigned to honour Cirey, and which other eyes have not the happiness to read. Madame du Chatelet affirms without hesitation that this, of all the things you have written, is most worthy of yourself. I am bold enough to think so too; but

your most recent favour is always the most cherished, and I fear lest I should deceive myself in my selection.

May I be permitted, paltry atom as I am, crawling in a corner of that world which your equals kings and emperors govern, may I be permitted to intreat information from your royal highness? I am one of those people who interrogate Providence. Your providence has rendered me too adventurous.

Is it in jest or earnest that your royal highness said the project of marshal de Villars, of uniting the emperor with France, has been followed? It seems to me that there is an air of truth discoverable, amidst the fine irony with which the passage is seasoned.

In effect, who should resist, were the emperor united with France and Spain? The English and Dutch might then employ their scales, with which they have endeavoured to weigh Europe, to weigh their bales from the east and west Indies. The following is an expression of the respectable author of that work by which I was struck—*Let fortune which presides over the happiness of France*—and which more than ever persuades me that France, very fortunately, played a game in which she was ignorant that she was

any

any way interested, the very moment before she took up the cards.

I have heard the late marshal de Villars say that it was found necessary to oblige France to take arms; that the French had twice even broken their word with the Spanish ministry, and that at length they had been hurried away by circumstances; piqued by the contempt which the whole council of the empire, except the great prince Eugene, openly testified for the French ministry; and in part encouraged by the hope of seeing king Stanislaus, who loves you with his whole heart, on the throne of Poland, where he would be seated had the wishes of the Polish nation and the laws prevailed.

Your royal highness knows that France, at first, intended to send king Stanislaus a more efficacious succour than that of fifteen hundred foot against fifty thousand Russians; but the threats of the English, and their fleet, ready to block up the passage, kept the famous Du Guè Trouin in port, who hoped to have measured swords with the monarchs of the ocean. They therefore sent king Stanislaus the aid of a pawn against a queen and a castle; and the king, whom they neither durst aid nor forsake, was checkmated.

Since that time, a concurrence of circumstances,

stances, by which the French ministry prudently profited, has bestowed Lorraine on France according to her ancient views, such as were proposed in the times of Louis XIV. It should seem that what we call Fortune played her part in this game. The players withdrew in good time, and returned as opportunely to win the stakes.

The French ministry, at first, it should seem, had so little inclination to war that, a year previous to its declaration, the payment of the subsidies to Sweden and Denmark had ceased.

I may compare France to a wealthy man, surrounded by people who progressively ruin themselves, and who buys their estates at a low price. It is nearly thus that this great body, united under one despotic chief, has swallowed up Rossillon, Alsatia, Franche Comté, the half of Flanders, Lorraine, &c. Your royal highness remembers the serpent with several heads, and the serpent with several tails. The latter found passage where the former could not.

May I take the liberty to request your royal highness would deign to inform me whether it is an opinion unanimously received, in the Empire, that Lorraine was one of its provinces; for it seems to me that the dukes of Lorraine did not think so, and even that it was not in quality

quality of dukes of Lorraine that they held a seat in the diet. Your royal highness knows that the Germanic jurisprudence is divided in opinion, on many articles; but your sentence shall be my code. Would that only minds like yours might make laws! There would then be no need of interpreters. Reflecting on all the events which have happened in our times, I begin to believe that all affairs are transacted between crowned heads much in the same manner as between private persons; each has received from nature a desire for personal aggrandisement; an opportunity seems to present itself, this is improved by intrigue; some woman is bribed by money, or a stronger motive, and opposes the negotiation; another renews it; circumstances, ill humour, caprice, contempt, a very nothing decides the event. If the duchess of Marlborough had not thrown a glass of water in the face of Mrs. Masham, and sprinkled queen Anne, the queen would not have thrown herself into the arms of the tories, nor have granted France a peace, without which France no longer could have stood her ground.

M. de Torcy has protested to me that he knew nothing of the will of Charles II. of Spain; that, after the thing had been done, an extraordinary council was assembled at Versailles, to

determine whether this will, which was to change the face of Europe, and elevate the house of Bourbon without aggrandizing France, should be accepted; or whether they should abide by a partition treaty, which should dismember the Spanish monarchy, and bestow all Flanders and Lorraine on France. The chancellor de Ponchartrain was of the latter opinion, and maintained it with vehemence. Louis XIV. and his son, the great Dauphin, thought rather like fathers than like kings, and the will was accepted; the consequence was that fatal war which made both the Spanish and French monarchy totter.

It should seem there is an evil genius that takes pleasure in disappointing the hopes of men, and in sporting with the fate of empires. Four years ago, any man would have astonished the people of Florence, who should have told them a man shall come from Austrasia, to be your prince.

It is believed in Europe that the system of Law had made all the money of the kingdom of France fly into the coffers of the regent, and I perceive that this opinion has reached even your royal highness. It certainly has the appearance of probability, but the fact is that Law, who came to France worth fifty thousand livres, died a ruined man; and that the late duke of Orleans

was

was seven millions of livres in debt, at his death, which his son found it very difficult to pay.

*Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable. **

Not that I think this frolicsome evil genius, that turns the world upside down, and laughs at mankind, performs all himself. Those powers which, in the succession of ages, or from war, marriage, &c. are become stronger than their neighbours, exert themselves to the utmost to engulf them; like as the rich lord oppresses the poor cottager; and this is called being a great politician. But this is what your adorable mind calls great injustice! Acts of horror! Your policy consists in preventing oppression. Every sovereign ought to have engraved upon their council board, and on their sword blades, the words with which your royal highness concludes: "To lose provinces is opprobrious and
"ignominious; and to conquer those over
"which we have no legal claim is unjust and
"criminal rapacity." This is the maxim of a great man, and the pledge of happiness to a whole people.

You royal highness must indulge an idea which has more than once entered my mind. When I

* Truth may sometimes be improbable,

have perceived the house of Austria ready to become extinct, I have said to myself, why should not the princes of the opposite communion to the court of Rome have their turn? Is there no prince among them sufficiently powerful to procure his own election? Might he not be aided by Sweden and Denmark; and, if such a prince should possess virtue and money, might not the odds be in his favour? Might not the empire be rendered alternate, like certain bishoprics, which are this time held by a Lutheran, and the next by a Catholic.

Let me beg your royal highness to pardon me this volume of Arabian night tales.

*Cum canerem reges et prælia, Cynthia aurem
Vellit et admonuit.*

Perhaps your royal highness is at present either at Cleves or Wesel. Why am not I upon the frontiers? Madame du Chatelet had a great desire to be there; she had even planned a journey toward Treves, that she might endeavour to see the Solomon of the North. A man of the family of du Chatelet possesses a small principality between Treves and Juliers, which might be sold, and which, perhaps, might suit his majesty. Madame du Chatelet would have much influence, were such a sale to take place;
and

and it would be a fine opportunity for her to pay her compliments to the most respectable prince of Europe. The queen of Sheba would go with great pleasure to consult the youthful Solomon; but I very much fear that this flattering idea likewise belongs to the thousand and one nights.

The sieur Thiriot has been gallant enough to inform me of a short saying of your royal highness, which indicated that your goodness toward me was in no manner diminished, by I know not what contemptible pamphlets, which occasionally appear against me at Paris—against me and against others much better than I am. These pamphlets, which Thiriot sends your royal highness, would give you an ill opinion of the understanding of the French, did you not previously know that such wretched works are the offspring of the lees of Parnassus, by whom they are written rather from motives of hunger than anger. It is interest that writes; but it is sometimes secret jealousy which distributes and gives them reputation.

It is very true that the marchioness du Chatelet wrote an essay on the nature of fire, for the prize of the academy of sciences; and it is equally true that she merited a part in the prize, which she would have received at any tribunal, that

excepted, which still is subjected to the laws of Descartes, and believes in a plenum.

She will not fail to do herself the honour to send your royal highness this essay, which you have deigned to demand, and which is worthy of such a judge. She joins me in every respectful sentiment.

I am, with all the veneration, gratitude, and attachment which I owe your royal highness, &c.

L E T T E R LXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

August, 1738.

I CONTINUALLY perceive, sir, and with a kind of satisfaction which approaches pride, that the little contrarieties I meet with from my country anger the noble heart of your royal highness. You cannot doubt that your suffrage amply rewards me for all such afflictions; afflictions that are common to every man of science or of letters, among whom those who have most loved the truth have always been the most persecuted.

Detraction

Detraction endeavoured to effect the ruin of Descartes and Bayle; Racine and Boileau would have died with grief, had they not found a protector in Louis XIV. There are verses still in being that were written against Virgil. I am far from being the equal of these great men; but I am much more happy than they were. I enjoy tranquillity, have a fortune suitable to a private person, and more than sufficient for a philosopher. I live in a delightful retreat, with one of the most respectable of women, whose company continually affords me new lessons; and, in fine, sir, you, the most virtuous, the most amiable prince in Europe, have deigned to love me, have deigned to open your heart to me, to trust me with your works and thoughts, and to correct mine.—What need I more!—Health only is wanting; but there is no valetudinarian so happy as I am.

Will your royal highness permit me to send you the half of the fifth act of *Merope*, which I have corrected? If, after reading it again, the piece should appear worthy of publication, perhaps I shall venture to send it to the press.

The marchioness du Chatelet has just received the plan of *Remusberg*, drawn by that amiable man whom the inhabitants of *Cirey* continually keep in remembrance. It is very

vexatious that all this is only to be seen upon paper, &c.

[*The rest is wanting.*]

L E T T E R LXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

August, 1738.

WHEN waning life had almost fled,
Your present rais'd me from the dead :
I saw the medium, when it came,
Of all my pleasure, all your fame.
But, ah ! what labours must produce
The gift, if put to worthy use !
He who Achilles' lance would wield
Should bear, at least, Patroclus' shield !
Can he who holds th' Orphean lyre,
The lifeless stock and stone inspire,
Bacchantes humanize, or quell
The triple-headed dog of hell,
Or emulate the bard of Thrace,
Who wants his sweetness and his grace ?
Let him the lance and lyre resign,
In whom such gifts can ne'er combine !

But different, sir, was your intent ;
To Emily was the present sent :

To

To Emily, who, great prince, before
 She had your boon, possess'd your lore !
 Heav'n, for the good of all mankind,
 Bestow'd on each an equal mind !
 Thus to Minerva Mars himself commends,
 And thus the godlike *Ægis* greeting sends.

Nothing less than your royal highness and Emily could inspire me with strength sufficient to write. I have been very near visiting the kingdom which Orpheus charmed, and whence I should not have wished to return, except to see Emily, and you, sir.

You do not think, perhaps, that I have sufficiently corrected *Merope*. I attempted in the beginning to imitate the marquis Maffei; for I passionately delight in proving the merits of foreign works to my own nation. But, by degrees, as I proceeded in my labours, *Merope* became wholly French. Thanks to your sage remarks, it is as much yours as mine. I, therefore, request permission, when I print it, to dedicate the tragedy to you, and lay it at your feet, together with my ideas on this kind of writing. I know not whether your royal highness has received the new edition of the elements of Newton. Having condescended to interest yourself so far in my behalf as to inform me that M. s'Gravefande does not speak well
of

of it, I can only say, this gives me no surprise.

The booksellers or pirates of Holland, impatient for the sale of the work, thought proper to patch up the two last chapters by a Dutch metaphysician, who, for his part, thought proper to controvert the opinions of M. s'Gravesande. In these two chapters, he denies the two finest results of the Newtonian system, the explanation of the tides, and the cause of the precession of the equinoxes, which follows without difficulty from the protuberance of the earth at the equator. M. s'Gravesande is with good reason attached to these two great points. The book is beside printed with a hundred ridiculous errors. The French edition, under the name of London, is a little more correct. The Cartesians exclaim like madmen, who perceive an attempt made to deprive them of the imaginary treasures on which they feasted; they suppose themselves reduced to wretchedness, if there be any vacuum in nature; the same as if they had been robbed; and some of them are very seriously angry. For my own part, I shall take care to be angry at nothing so long as *divus Fredericus et diva Emilia* honour me with their friendship.

We have received some further information
concerning

concerning this Beringhen, which is a town lying between the countries of Liege and Juliers. Should that correspond with the intentions of his majesty, and should he deign to honour the owner with the title of his subject, every law would be submitted to, as in reason it ought, which his majesty shall deign to prescribe. Madame du Chatelet has not dared to mention the affair to your royal highness, but she has requested me to venture to demand your protection. We shall act in this business according to your orders. Madame du Chatelet has just sent a person to the place, who is an advocate of Lorraine.

Should the affair take the turn I wish, it will not be difficult to induce the marquis du Chatelet to make a short journey thither. I can also foresee that I may, with all possible decorum, though it should be published in every gazette, come and throw myself at the feet of your royal highness, and see him whom I admire.

I hope that your other subject, M. Thiriot, will come, for a few days, to our castle at Cirey. Your worship will then be perfect there, and we shall chant hymns dictated by the heart.

I am, with the most profound respect, and that tender gratitude which daily augments, &c.

LET.

L E T T E R LXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Cirey, August, 1738.

YOUR royal highness reproaches me, according to M. Thiriot, for suffering my occupations rather than illness to be the cause of my silence. But I have done myself the honour to write by M. Plœtz, and M. Thiriot, and now I write a third letter, so that your royal highness may rather, at present, complain of my importunity.

This, sir, neither relates to the belles lettres, poetry, philosophy, nor history, but is an additional liberty which I venture to take with your royal highness, trespassing upon your indulgence and your goodness.

I have had the honour to mention a small principality to your royal highness, situated toward Liege and Juliers, which is called Beringhen. It consists of Ham and Beringhen, and appertains to the marquis de Trichâteau, in his mother's right, who was of the house of Honfbruk.

There are some incumbrances on it, and madame du Chatelet, who has full powers to dispose of it, is very desirous that this small corner
of

of land, which is not held of any person might be found suitable to his majesty, the king your father. Five or six hundred thousand florins, which may be the worth of the estate, make but an accessory circumstance of the business; the principal will be, the queen of Sheba will repair thither to behold the Solomon of Europe. Your royal highness knows I shall be of the party, and the country of Juliers will then indeed become the promised land where I shall see *salutare meum*.

Perhaps I know not what I say, but the truth is I have supposed that, should such a proposal for sale be convenient to the interests of his majesty, I shall not then have committed any political treason, and that the ministers of his majesty would afford no opposition, should your royal highness make or cause the proposal to be made. I intreat your royal highness first to inform yourself relative to the estate, and its rights and privileges, as well as the precise district in which it is situated, with which I am unacquainted.

I understand nothing of politics, I only perfectly understand the sentiments of zeal, respect, admiration, and I had almost said the tenderness with which I am, &c.

The marquis and marchioness du Chatelet
are

are in present possession of this small principality, which has been adjudged to them according to a donation made to them by the marquis de Trichâteau : but they do not receive any of the rents, which are left untouched to pay off incumbrances.

L E T T E R LXVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

Brussels, September 1st, 1738.

HER yellow wine Hungaria sends,
To cheer the princely Frederic's friends ;
Duke Aremberg soon granted leave
His well-stor'd cellar should receive
The precious balm ; the friendly boon,
By Voltaire being tasted, soon
Shall, to his pulse-forsaken heart,
Warm renovating life impart !
The smiling Emily too shall quaff
Such nectar as the gods makes laugh !
What drug, that pharmacy can yield,
So well can man from misery shield ?
Good doctor Superville, adieu !
No more I need your draughts or you ;
No more I'll take your nauseous pills ;
I've found a cure for all my ills :
You cannot think it much amiss
That Frederic my physician is !

No

No custom will you have of mine—
 Sir, he prescribes me gen'rous wine!
 No more need I my guineas give,
 I've but to drink your health and live.

M. Schelling has informed me, sir, some days since, of the safe landing of this good wine in the cellar of the patron of that liquor; and the duke d'Aremberg will give us the godlike tun on his return from Enguien. But the letter of your royal highness, dated June the 26th, and brought us by the aforefaid M. Schelling, is worth the whole district of Tokay.

Enchanting prince, say by what art,
 What various ways thou win'st the heart!
 That hand which sweeps th' Horatian lyre
 Snatches the pen in virtuous ire,
 And straight thy potent words dispel
 The baneful charms of Machiavel!
 Yes, wondrous prince, thee Heav'n design'd
 To teach and captivate mankind.
 Ye kings! whom men are bade revere,
 Look up and learn your duties here!
 Listen, if well ye wish to reign—
 Alas! I call, but call in vain!

Yet, with all those light graces, so charmingly scattered through your letter, M. Schelling further swears the regiment of your royal highness is the finest regiment in Prussia, and consequently

frequently the finest in the world ; for *omne tulit punctum* is your motto.

Your royal highness, at present, returns to visit your northern subjects, and will add an additional glow to the climate. Nay, I am certain, whenever I shall come thither (and thither I shall come, without doubt, for I shall not die without having paid obedience to my prince) I shall find the heat greater at Remusberg than at Frescati. Philosophers would in vain pretend that the earth has approached the sun. They form foolish systems ; I shall learn the truth from experience.

Your royal highness has informed me that you found it necessary to read many books for the composition of your Anti-Machiavel ; but so much the better ; your reading will not be labour in vain. Inferior metals will be transmuted into gold, in your crucible. There are the political discourses of Gordon, which precede his translation of Tacitus, and which are well worthy of being examined by a reader like my prince. Yet what need has Hercules of aid to strangle Antæus, or to exterminate Cacus ?

I am going hard to work, that I may finish the small tribute which I have promised my only master. In a fortnight you will have the second act of Mahomet : the first already ought to

have come to hand, by the same conveyance, that of the sieurs Gerard and company.

There is a new edition of my works printing in Holland ; but your royal highness possesses many of them which the booksellers have never yet printed. I will acknowledge no other *Henriade* than that which is honoured by your name and your favours. It certainly was not I who wrote the other *Henriades*.

I quit the company of my prince to work at Mahomet, and am, &c. &c.

L E T T E R LXVII.

From the Prince Royal.

Remusberg,

MY DEAR FRIEND;

September 11, 1738.

A JOURNEY sufficiently long, sufficiently fatiguing, abounding with incidents, occupations, and still more with dissipation, has prevented my answering your letter of the 5th of August, which only came to hand, at Berlin, on the 3d of September.

No person less eloquent than yourself so well could have defended and palliated the conduct of your ministry in the affair of Poland ; you

will render a signal service to your country, should you be able to convince Europe that the intentions of France were always conformable to the manifesto of the year 1733. You cannot imagine how many prejudices are entertained against Gallic policy, and you know the potency of prejudice. I am extremely flattered by the approbation which you and the marchioness bestow on my work, which will encourage me to do better.

I will now answer all your interrogations, charmed that you have stated them, and ready to produce my authorities. What I said concerning the project of marshal Villars, which the French ministry have adopted, is no joke, but serious assertion; and is so true, that information of it has been received from more persons than one; and this formidable project incites intrigues among several powers. A succession of years only will shew us all the fatal consequences which may follow. Either I am much deceived, or this project prepares events, such as overturn empires, and such as will change the face of Europe.

The comparison you have made between France and a prudent and wealthy man, surrounded by poor and prodigal neighbours, is as happy a one as can be imagined; it forcibly depicts

depicts the powers of the French, and the feebleness of surrounding provinces ; shews the reason of the difference, and permits the imagination to penetrate into future ages, and there to behold the continual increase of the French monarchy, flowing from one constant uniform principle ; a power united under a despotic chief, and which, according to all appearances, will one day swallow up its neighbours.

Thus it is that she has acquired Lorraine, from the disunion of the empire and the weakness of the emperor. Lorraine has, in all ages, been supposed a fief of the empire ; it was formerly a part of the circle of Burgundy, which was dismembered from the empire by this same France. The dukes of Lorraine, in all ages, had a seat in the diet. They have always paid their Roman months, furnished their contingencies in time of war, and fulfilled all the duties of princes of the empire. True it is the duke Charles often embraced the part either of France or Spain ; but he was not less a member of the empire. Thus the elector of Bavaria commanded the armies of Louis XIV. against those of the emperor and his allies.

You very judiciously remark that the men who ought to be the most consistent, those who govern kingdoms, and who, in a word, decide

on the happiness or misery of nations, are sometimes those who commit the most to chance. The reason is these kings, princes, and ministers, like private persons, are no more than men; and the whole difference between them and people of an inferior rank consists in the importance of their actions. A fountain which throws up water three feet high is as much a fountain as another which throws the water a hundred feet; the real difference between them is in the efficacious power of the projection. A queen of England, surrounded by a female court, will always impart something to her government which shall partake of her sex; I mean to say of whim and caprice.

I believe that the oaths of ministers and lovers are nearly of equal value. M. Torcy may have told you what he pleased, but I shall always suspect the words of a man who is accustomed to give them different interpretations. Such men are a kind of prophets, who discover a wonderful affinity between what they have said and what they meant to have said. Nothing was more easy for M. Torcy than to put words into the mouth of Pontchartrain, Louis XIV. or the Dauphin; he did but assume the
office

office of a good dramatic writer, who makes each person speak in character.

I confess I partook of the prejudice, which is almost universal, relative to the Regent. It has been loudly asserted he very considerably enriched himself by stockjobbing. One of the clerks of law, who at that time retired to Berlin, has even assured the king that he had received a commission from the Regent to transmit very considerable sums that were to be placed in the bank of Amsterdam. I am glad to find this was calumny. I interest myself in the memory of the Regent as of a man endowed with superior genius, and who, after having acknowledged the wrong he did the nation, loaded it with favours. I am certain to think justly when I agree with you, This is a touchstone on which I can always try the value of my thoughts. Humanity, that most commendable virtue, and which includes all the others, ought, according to me, to be the inheritance of every rational man; and, though it were extinct in the world beside, still it should live immortal in the hearts of princes.

Your ideas are too much to my advantage. The politician Voltaire wishes me the imperial crown; the philosopher Voltaire intreats Heaven would deign to give me wisdom; and Voltaire,

D d 3

my

my friend, can wish me nothing except his company which can render me happy. No, my dear friend, I have no desire for grandeur ; and if grandeur should come it will come unfought for.

The projected journey is, to my regret, a little too late, and perhaps will, to my misfortune, never take place, though it would have given me supreme happiness. Had I seen you and the marchioness, I should have imagined I had profited more by the expedition than Clairaut, Maupertuis, La Condamine, and all your academicians who have failed so far in order to find a line. Men of wit, in my opinion, are the quintessence of the human species ; and I should, at a single glance, have seen the finest flower of the wreath. I might accuse your imagination and that of the divine Emily of indolence in not having formed such a project sooner. It is now too late, and I can see but one remedy, which remedy is not very distant ; I allude to the death of the elector palatine, of which I will give you timely notice. Would to Heaven you and the marchioness could come to that estate, where I might then most assuredly enjoy a happiness so dear and delicious !

I am enraged against your nation, and the chiefs of your nation, for not repressing the cruel
fury

fury of your persecutors. When the venom of envy withers your laurel, the laurel of France withers at the same moment; and to suffer this with impunity is cowardice. I cannot forbear exclaiming against it, nor can your generosity afford any real excuse*.

I am highly obliged to the marchioness for her dissertation on fire, which she means to send me. I will read it for my own instruction; and should I express any trifling doubts, it will only be that I may the better find the road of truth. Be kind enough to offer a thousand assurances of esteem to her in my behalf.

Inclosed is a piece newly finished, the first fruits of my retreat, and which I offer to you as the pagans offered their first-fruits to their deities. I request in return sincerity, truth and frankness. I think myself happy to possess a friend of your merit. Let me intreat you ever to remain my friend, and to be only the friend; for this character will render you still more amiable, if possible, in my eyes.

I am,

With all imaginable esteem, &c.

* The Basil edition adds—"Forgive them, Lord; they know not what they do." T.

L E T T E R LXVIII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remusberg,
September 14, 1738.

I HAVE this moment received your letter, of the 8th August, which, unfortunately, arrived too late. We have been returned from the country of Cleves above a fortnight, which entirely impedes the execution of your project. I have every obligation to your friendship, and the kind attentions of the marchioness. Nothing, certainly, can be more flattering than the plan of the divine Emily. I, however, believe that, notwithstanding * the advantage of acquisition, and the purchase of a lordship, I should not have enjoyed the ineffable happiness of seeing you both. Some learned dull counsellor would have been sent to Ham, who would most methodically, and most scrupulously, have drawn up the conditions of sale; would have wearied you magnificently, and, after having gone through all requisite formalities, would have signed the deed with a scientific flourish.

* The Berlin edition reads—*without* the advantage, &c.—
This must be erroneous. T.

On

On his return, I should have had the barren advantage of interrogating him concerning all he had heard and seen ; and, Mr. Counsellor, instead of speaking to me of Voltaire and Emily, would have entertained me with acres of land, manor rights and privileges, and with all the jargon of the secretaries of Plutus.

I imagine if the marchioness will wait till the death of the elector palatine, whose age and health threaten dissolution, she may then dispose of this estate with more facility. I have some supposition, though I know not very well why, that the dispute concerning succession will revive next spring. Our march into the country of Juliers and Berg will then be an infallible consequence. Should this happen, might not the marchioness repair to her lordship, which is in the neighbourhood of these duchies ; and might not the worthy Voltaire make a short excursion, as far as the Prussian camp ? I would prepare every thing for your convenience : you should have a good house in the village nearest to the camp, where I should be near to visit you, or from which you might come to my tent, in a short time, according as your health should permit. Let me intreat you to reflect on this, and to tell me frankly what you can effect in my favour. Do not, however, venture any thing

thing which may cause you the least chagrin on the part of your court. I would not pay the price of making you unhappy, in order to secure my own felicity. The marchioness, from whom I have just received a letter, tells me that she depends on my discretion with respect to all the manuscript pieces which your friendship has bestowed on me. I hope you do not entertain the least inquietude on this head. You know what I have promised you ; not to mention that indiscretion is not one of my defects. When I receive any new works from you, I read them in the presence of Kayserling and Jordan ; after which I confide them to memory, and retain them like the words of Moses, with which the kings of Israel were obliged to make themselves familiar. They are then shut up in the back cabinet of my archives, from which I never take them, except to read them alone.

Your letters are treated the same ; and, though our correspondence is suspected, no person is positively certain of the fact. Nor do my precautions end here. I have guarded against accidents, and my servants have orders to burn a certain packet, should I fall into any extreme danger. My life has been one chain of vexation, and the school of adversity renders men
circumspect,

circumspect, discreet, and compassionate. They are attentive to their smallest actions when they reflect on the consequences that may follow, and are very willing to spare others the affliction they have felt.

If your labours and your assiduity prevent you from writing to me, far from blaming, I am but the more obliged to you. You labour for my happiness; and, when illness interrupts our correspondence, I accuse fate, and suffer in company with you.

The philosophic ode I have received is perfect; the thoughts are radically true, which is the principal circumstance; they possess that air of novelty which strikes, and are dressed in that poetic style which so agreeably flatters the ear. Wit is there resplendent, and my applause is due to this excellent ode; nor is flattery necessary, but truth only, in bestowing this applause. The stanza which begins—*Tandis que des humains*—is infinitely comprehensive. At Paris it would form the subject of a comedy; at London, Pope would turn it into an epic poem; and, in Germany, my good countrymen would find sufficient materials from which to hammer out a well-conditioned folio of ample size. I esteem you equally, my dear Proteus, whether you appear in the character of philosopher,

pher, politician, historian, or poet, or in what ever other form it shall please you to assume. The strength of your mind in subjects so opposite appears equal: it is a diamond which reflects rays of every colour, all of which alike are dazzling.

I more than ever recommend to you the care of your health, great attention to diet, and few philosophic experiments. Let me hear from you, at least, though you should not be able to write yourself. I protest you are the very opposite of indifferent to me; I seem to have a kind of mortgage upon you, which consists in the esteem I bear you. I must hear of my property, and when I do not my fertile fancy conjures up monsters and phantoms for me to combat. Remain ever persuaded of the sentiments with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R LXIX.

From the Prince Royal.

Remusberg, September 30, 1738.

WHAT! On the black Cocytian shore,
Where others their hard fate deplore,
Thy voice melodious canst thou raise,
And though expiring sing my praise!

The

The house of harmony canst thou
 Make that which is the house of woe !
 Divine Voltaire !——Though ill, thy muse
 Ten thousand rival bards subdues ;
 Alike the poet and the sage,
 Of ev'ry most renowned age,
 However witty, wise, or vast,
 Thy vig'rous genius hath surpass'd !
 Profound in knowledge, thou wert born
 The world t' enlighten and adorn,
 To free and form a stupid race,
 Whom zeal and ignorance debase.
 May that humanity which guides
 Thy pen, and o'er thy works presides,
 Conquer mankind ; till reason builds a throne
 Where thou shalt reign, with honours all thy own.

Do not, at least, suppose that I write in verse
 purposely to enter the lists with you. I stammer-
 ing answer in a language which Voltaire and the
 Gods only are allowed to speak. You daily in-
 crease my apprehensions, concerning the pre-
 carious state of your health. Since fate, which
 governs the world, was unable to unite all the
 powers of mind which you possess with a robust
 and healthy body, how can it be expected that
 we poor mortal governors should not commit
 errors ?

I have received the epistle on Moderation *
 from Paris, with corrections and additions.

* *Épître sur la modération.*

Among other passages, the allegoric description of Cirey gave me great pleasure. The piece is much improved, and I will own that the physician who came, sat down, and fell asleep, did not satisfy me. Is there not something trifling in the dog that dies while licking his master's hand; something beneath the beauties which in other respects abound so much in this epistle? I tell you my opinion less as a critic than from a desire to form my taste. Have the goodness to answer and inform me of your sentiments.

If I may judge from the corrections made in *Merope*, it must be a finished piece. I have had no greater part in them than that which the people of Athens had in the works of Phidias, and the old woman of Moliere in his comedies. I divine the passages which you would correct, and you have not only retouched them but have effaced other faults, which I was unable to discover. I am infinitely obliged to you for your intention to insert my name at the head of this fine tragedy. My fate will resemble that of Atticus, who was immortalized by the letters which were addressed to him by Cicero.

Thiriot has sent me the London edition of the Newtonian philosophy; I have run it through, but I will read it again, with greater attention. According to the manner in which you explain
the

the trade of the Dutch booksellers, it is by no means astonishing that s'Gravesande should rise in arms against your translation.

Does it not appear to you that there is as much incertitude in physics as in metaphysics? I behold myself every where surrounded by doubt, and, when I think I have grasped truth, I examine it, and acknowledge how unsubstantial was the ground on which I formed my judgment. Nor, with your leave, are mathematical truths exempt from doubt; and, when the pro and con of propositions are well examined, we find equal incertitude in determining. In a word, I believe there are but very few evident truths.

These considerations induced me to write down my opinions on error, which I have done in the form of a dialogue. My end was to shew that difference of opinion, among mankind, whether in philosophy or religion, ought never to interrupt the ties of friendship and humanity subsisting between them. It was necessary I should prove the innocence of error, and this I did. I have done more; I have shewn that error which originates in the search after truth, so long as it is not seen to be error, is praise worthy. You will determine better than I, when you have read it; and for this purpose I submit it to your criticism.

I believe

I believe it would not be proper, at present, to attempt any thing concerning the business of Beringhen. We are here in daily expectation of new events, and you will easily comprehend that men who seriously prepare for war allot but little time to other affairs. It is my opinion, therefore, that we must wait till the skain is unravelled, which soon must happen, the situation of affairs considered; and, when we shall be in possession of these duchies, it will be much more natural for us to endeavour to connect and make such acquisitions as that of the lordship of Beringhen. My projects then may take place, because the king, finding himself in his own country, may go in person to examine whether the acquisition be suitable. I refer in other respects to my last letter, in which I have circumstantially related the extent of my hopes, and the manner in which I flatter myself with obtaining a sight of you.

Thiriot should now be at Cirey. And am I the only person that am for ever to be banished the place? My curiosity is very great to know how you have answered madame de Brand. All I am informed of is that there are some verses in your answer; let me beg of you to be communicative.

The marchioness shall have as many pens as
it

it shall please her to break*, and it shall be my province to provide a supply. I have already written to Prussia for this purpose, and for other things which were omitted when the ink-stand was sent. Assure this singular marchioness of my attention and my esteem.

I am ever, and more than you can imagine,
&c.

L E T T E R LXX.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Kennelberg,
November 9, 1738.

I HAVE just received a letter and verses such as you only are capable of writing; but if I have the advantage of thus receiving letters and verses, superior in beauty to every thing which has ever appeared, I am also in the dilemma of not knowing how to answer. You send me gold from your Potosi, and I have only lead to return. After having read the charming lines which you have addressed to me, I more

* The marchioness had broken an amber pen which had been sent her.

than once hesitated concerning sending you the epistle on humanity, which you will receive with this letter. But, at length, I said, homage must be paid at Cirey, and it is necessary to send thither in search of instruction and sage reproof. These motives, I hope, will induce you to accept the bad verses I return you, and grant them your protection.

Thiriot has just remitted me the work of the marchioness, on fire. I can truly affirm I was astonished while I read! No one could imagine such a work had been written by a woman. The style is masculine, and entirely suitable to the subject. You are both very admirable and singular people of your kind, and daily increase the admiration of those to whom you are known. I often have ideas on this subject which your modesty obliges me to conceal. The pagans have deified persons who certainly were far inferior to you both. Had you lived in those ages you would have been the first of the Olympian gods.

Nothing more strongly marks the difference of manners, between the present and those ancient times, than a comparison of the mode in which antiquity treated great men, with the mode in which they are treated in this age. Magnanimity, grandeur of mind, and fortitude,

are held to be chimerical virtues. I hear people exclaim—"Pshaw! You pretend to act the Roman when it is no longer the fashion; the present age treats such affectation with contempt."—So much the worse; the Romans who *pretended* to virtue were great men; and why not imitate them in what was praise-worthy?

Greece was so proud of having produced Homer that more than ten cities disputed the honour of his birth; yet the Homer of France, and the most respectable man of the whole nation, is exposed to the shafts of envy.

Virgil, in despite of the verses which some obscure rhymers wrote, peaceably enjoyed the protection of Augustus and Mæcenas; like as Boileau, Racine, and Corneille, did that of Louis the Great. You are deprived of these advantages; and, to own the truth, I do not believe your fame will be any sufferer by the loss. The applause of a sage, of an Emily, must, to any man of sound sense, be preferable to that of the throne. Your mind is not enslaved, nor is your muse enchained to the chariot wheels of the great; you are of higher worth, which is an irrevocable testimony of your sincerity; for it is well known that such worth has, in all ages, been found incompatible with the mean flattery which prevails in courts.

The history of Louis XIV. which I have just read, once more feels the good effects of your abode at Cirey. The work is excellent, nor does the world afford such another; I earnestly request you to let me have the continuation; but, as a friend, I advise you not to send it to press. The descendants of all those of whom you have spoken the truth will league against you. Some will affirm you have said too much; and others that you have not been sufficiently copious on the virtues of their ancestors. The priests, that implacable race, will never pardon the little traits by which they are occasionally attacked. I dare even venture to affirm that this history, written with truth, and in a philosophic spirit, ought never to depart from the circle of philosophers: it is not adapted to people who do not know how to think.

Your two letters have produced very different effects on the persons to whom they were addressed. Cesario, who had the gout, lost his disease with joy; and Jordan, who was in good health, was in danger of an apoplectic fit. Of such very different effects may the same cause be productive. They must explain their feelings themselves; they will perform the task much better than I can.

Remusberg only wants a Voltaire to be perfectly

fectly happy. Notwithstanding your absence, your image is, if I may so say, innate in our hearts; you are ever present with us, your portrait hangs in my library, above the case which contains your golden fleece; it is placed immediately over your works, and opposite where I sit, so that I have it always before me. I had almost said this portrait resembles the statue of Memnon, which yielded a harmonious sound when struck by the rays of the sun; and after the same manner your portrait animates those who look on it. To me it seems to say,

O vous donc qui brûlez d'une ardeur perilleuse—

Remember always, I beseech you, the little flock of Remusberg, and so remember as to address your pastoral letters to this flock. These are necessary sources of consolation during your absence; you owe them to your friends, at the head of whom I hope you will place me; for no one can be more ardently your friend than I am, and shall ever remain, &c.

• *Oh ye who burn with ardour perilous—*

BORISAV,

L E T T E R LXXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

October, 1738.

YOUR royal highness will pardon a poor invalid, who is enriched by your benefactions, if he seem too tardy in paying the tribute of gratitude.

What you have written on the subject of humanity indubitably secures you the suffrage and esteem of madame du Chatelet, and forces my admiration, had I not been previously disposed to admire. Not only will Cirey thank your royal highness, there is not a person on earth who will not be indebted to you. If nothing but the title of the work were known, that would be sufficient to render you the master of all hearts. A prince who thinks of men, and who delights in rendering them happy ! It will be asked in what romance such a prince exists, whether his name be Alcimedon or Almanfor, and whether he be the son of a fairy, or of some genius ? No, good people ! Our prince is a real being ; him whom Heaven has bestowed on earth ; whose name is Frederic, and whose usual abode is in solitude at Remusberg.—But why inform

inform you of this? His name, his virtues, his understanding, his talents, are already known to the whole world! Had the world but seen what he has written on humanity, the world would send deputies to return him thanks. But such good fortune is reserved for Cirey, where these favours are kept secret. Those who formerly undertook to consult the demi-gods boasted of the oracles they received; we receive oracles, but we do not boast.

There is a secret sympathy, sir, which subjects my soul to your royal highness; a something more powerful than pre-established harmony. I was myself projecting an epistle on humanity; when I received that of your royal highness; and here I find my task completed. Antiquity tells us of people who had a genius which afforded them aid in their great enterprises; my genius is at Remusberg.—Who indeed should by right speak of humanity; who but you, great prince, whose heart is generous and affectionate: you, sir, who have deigned to consult physicians in behalf of one of your sick servants, who dwells near three hundred leagues from your presence? Ah!—In despite of these three hundred leagues, I feel my heart most nearly allied to that of your royal highness.

I even flatter myself, with some appearance

of reality, that this vast space will soon disappear. Let the elector palatine die, if so he shall please; but, whether or no, the confines of Cleves and Juliers will behold madame du Chatelet at the approaching spring. We will take proper measures to be near your states. I well know that in such affairs we can answer for nothing; but the hope of paying our court to your royal highness, of beholding him whom we admire, and whom we at a distance love, will remove many difficulties. I imagine your royal highness will grant passports to madame du Chatelet; but who will stop her when they shall be informed she comes thither to see your royal highness? And who will dare to do me ill, when I shall stretch my hand holding out the epistle on humanity?

How highly am I delighted that your royal highness was pleased with the essay on fire, by the marchioness du Chatelet, the composition of which she made her amusement, and which, in reality, is rather a finished work than an essay! Were it not for the curst vortexes of Descartes, which still whirl in the old heads of the academy, madame du Chatelet would certainly have obtained the prize; which act of justice would have done honour to her sex and her judges. But prejudice reigns every where absolute.

Newton

Newton has in vain discovered the secrets of light. There are old romantic philosophers who persist to maintain the chimeras of Mallebranche. The academy will one day blush at their tardiness to see the truth; and it will remain on record that a young lady dared to embrace sound philosophy, when most of her judges feebly studied it only to afford obstinate opposition.

M. de Maupertuis, a man who dares to love and speak truth, though persecuted, has boldly, though secretly, affirmed that the French discourses which gained the prizes were pitiable. His suffrage, added to that of Remusberg, are the highest reward that can be bestowed.

Madame du Chatelet will think herself exceedingly flattered, should your royal highness permit M. Jordan to read the essay with which you have been pleased. She with good reason esteems the man whom you esteem.

I am, &c.

LET.

L E T T E R LXXII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remusberg,

November 22, 1738 *.

IT must be owned you are an admirable debtor, your payments are never long in arrear, and all barter with you is highly advantageous. I am under infinite obligations to you, for your epistle on pleasure. This system of theology appears to me highly worthy of the Deity, and perfectly accords with my manner of thinking. What do I not owe you for that admirable work?

The gods, by Homer sung, were bony, strong,
Robust, puissant :—Him that thunders from
The pulpit is of tyranny the type :
But thine, Voltaire, is sweet and gentle pleasure ;
And thine's the true ;—yes, pleasure is the God
Of minds beneficent, and glowing hearts.

They cannot better understand the difference of genius than by examining the manner in which different persons express the same thoughts. The countess de Platen, of whom you must have heard speak in England, in or-

* Dated December 1st, 1738, in the Berlin edition.

der to avoid uttering the word eunuch, paraphrased it by saying *a brilliant man*. Her idea was taken from a brilliant cut diamond. This mode of expression was very characteristic of woman; I mean to say of a mind inviolably attached to ornaments and trifles. The man of genius, the great poet, is manifested in a very different manner, by the following beautiful paraphrase.

He whom steel hath robbed of the sources of life.

Not to mention that there is something striking in the thought itself of a God attended by eunuchs, it marvellously expresses the idea of the poet. This manner of touching, with modesty and perspicuity, on so delicate a subject as that of *mutilation* * highly contributes to the pleasure of the reader.

It is not because this piece is addressed to me; it is not because you have been pleased to speak well of me; but it is from its own intrinsic worth that I yield it full and due praise. I much suspect that the God of the schools would gain little by passing through your hands. Do not imagine, I intreat you, that I carry my scept-

* The Berlin edition reads *circumcision*, but again, beyond doubt, erroneously.

ticism to excess. There are some truths so well proved that my reason does not admit of doubt. I believe, for example, that there is but one God, and one Voltaire, in the world; and I further believe that this God, in this present age, stood in need of this Voltaire to render it agreeable.

You have washed, cleaned, and retouched an old picture by Raphael, the traits of which had been rendered obscure by the varnish of some ignorant-dauber. The principal end I proposed in my dissertation on error was the proof of its innocence. I have not dared to be explicit on the subject of religion, for which reason I preferred a philosophic theme. I, nevertheless, respect Copernicus, Descartes, Leibnitz, and Newton; but I am not sufficiently old to be the partisan of either. A youth, between twenty and thirty, should rather be guided by the opinions of the academy than assume a decisive and dictatorial tone. We must begin by learning before we judge, which is what I do. I read all with an impartial mind, intending to gain instruction, and in obedience to your excellent remark—

“And onward were they led to truth by doubt.”

I have read with admiration and astonishment
the

the work of the marchioness, on fire; and it has given me an idea of her vast genius, her knowledge, and your felicity, which you too much merit for me to envy it you. Enjoy your paradise, but let us, who are but human spectators, participate your happiness.

You may assure Emily that she has inspired me with a particular veneration for fire; not the fire which she with so much sagacity has analysed, but that of her potent genius.

May a sceptic be permitted to state some doubts which have arisen in his mind? In a philosophic work, where truth is scrupulously sought, are the dreams of antiquity allowable? I bestow this epithet on what seems to have escaped the marchioness, relative to the fire excited in forests, by the motion of the branches. I am unacquainted with the phenomena mentioned in the article of the causes of the freezing of water. There are said to be ponds in Switzerland which are found frozen, during summer, in the months of June and July. My own ignorance occasions these doubts. I shall certainly profit, for your explanation will instruct me.

After having spoken of your works, and those of the marchioness, I scarcely can be permitted to mention my own. I must, however, accompany

accompany this letter by a piece which I was told I must write. The greatest pleasure you can do me, next to that of sending me your own productions, is to correct mine. I have had the good fortune to have conceived the same thoughts as you, which you will perceive toward the conclusion of the work. He who has little genius, who is not aided by some enlightened critic, and who writes in a foreign language, cannot hope any great progress. To rhyme in despite of all these impediments seems, in some manner, to be afflicted with the disease of the Abderitans *.

I trust you with all my follies, which is the greatest mark I can give of the confidence and esteem with which I inviolably am, &c.

P. S. † I have a trifling amber toy for Cirey; and some Hungarian wine, which is said to be balsamic, for my friend. I intend to send the packet through Hamburgh to Rouen, and from thence to Paris, addressed to Thiriot; for I do not believe that any carrier can easily be found who would take charge of it.

* In allusion to Democritus, who laughed continually. T.

† The postscript is omitted in the Berlin edition. T.

LETTER LXXIII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Berlin, Dec. 25, 1738 *.

I HAVE lately read with much pleasure the letter addressed by you to your unfaithful editors in Holland. The part I take in your reputation induces me warmly to participate that applause which the public cannot fail to bestow on your moderation.

Such moderation ought to be the peculiar character of every man of science. That philosophy which enlightens the mind increases our knowledge of the human heart; and the most solid benefit that can be derived from it is that compassion which induces us to support the weaknesses, defects, and failings of men. It were to be wished that the learned in their disputes, divines in their quarrels, and princes in their contentions, would imitate your moderation. Knowledge, true religion, and the most dignified characters among men, ought to raise those who are in possession of them above certain passions, which ought only to be the in-

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

heritance

heritance of mean minds. Beside that merit when acknowledged resides in a kind of fortress, and is there guarded against the shafts of envy. Every arrow shot at an inferior enemy dishonours the man that holds the bow.

Thus, hiding in the clouds his daring head,
Proud Athos seems old earth and heav'n to join.
The fearful thunder he unshaken views
Descend, and dash its fires against his feet :
And thus the sage, in learned calm repose,
Envy and all her clam'rous wiles contemns,
Hears not the terms opprobrious which she vents,
Heeds not th' envenom'd arrows which she hurls,
But to the world at large the monster leaves
For chastisement, which he disdains t' inflict.

The art of retorting abuse for abuse should be confined to the market-place ; and though the abuse itself should be truth, though it should partake of the divine fire of poetry, still it would ever remain abuse. It may be very proper for those who fight in mobs, with bludgeons ; but very improper for such as understand the true art of defence.

Your merit has elevated you so much above satire and envy that you certainly have no occasion to repel their attacks ; their malice is but temporary, and will sink with them into everlasting forgetfulness. History, which has preserved the memory of Aristides, has not condescended

descended to mention the names of those by whom he was envied; they are as little known as the persecutors of Ovid. In a word, revenge is the passion of every offended man, but generosity is only the passion of noble minds. Such is yours; and such certainly was the passion that dictated the charming letter, which I cannot enough admire, addressed by you to your book-fellers.

I am delighted to see the world obliged to confess your philosophy is as sublime in practice as in speculation. My applause will ever accompany that letter. Dissipations of the city, certain terms unknown at Cirey, and at Remusberg, such as duty, respect, and court, which are inconvenient in practice, rob me of all my time. This you will no doubt perceive, for I had not enough to shorten my letter.

Let me beg you to assure the goddesses who metamorphoses Newton into Venus of my adoration; and if you meet a certain philosophic poet, the author of the *Henriade*, and of the epistle to *Urania*, tell him no one can hold him in higher esteem and consideration than myself.

P. S. A propos, how proceeds Louis XIV.?
—The word importunity will escape you—
“That Apicius is never satiated with my
“works.”

L E T T E R LXXIV.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

December, 1738.

WE have just received an ink-stand which I, unworthy as I am, and madame du Chatelet, hoped to have had the honour of presenting to your royal highness, as a new year's gift. The ambaffador who, according to your pleasant description, is so often in danger of mistaking you for a bastion or a counterfcarp, will present you with a culverin or a mortar; but we thinking beings, in all humility, send our chief the instrument with which we communicate our thoughts. It is directed to Antwerp, for which it departs to-day, and from Antwerp is to go to Wesel, addressed to the baron de Borck; or, should he be absent, to the governor of the town; to be forwarded to your royal highness.

I am encouraged in taking this liberty because that this trifling homage, sent you by a subject, having been manufactured at Paris, imitates and surpasses the China lacker: it is a new art in Europe, and every art should pay you

you tribute. Pardon, therefore, sir, this excess of temerity.

I am, with the most tender gratitude, the most inviolable attachment and esteem, and the most profound respect,

SIR,
Your royal highness's &c.

L E T T E R LXXV.

From M. de Voltaire.

Cirey, January 1, 1739.

HERO of mind sublime, what can I say,
On this well wishing compliment'ry day ?
Already are you good, and great, and wise !
Friendship and love your name immortalize !
But with I must—Well, then, may those who reign
O'er mortals, doom'd to want and pine in pain,
Make you their guide, tho' 'twere but now and then ;
And recollect while monarchs they are men !
To human woes may you their minds recal !
Such is the new-year's wish I, greeting, send them all.

As I was continuing in the same strain, the letter of your royal highness, and the epistle to the prince who has the good fortune to be your
brother,

brother, arrived, and the pen dropped from my hand.—Really, sir, your leisure is most singularly employed; and the very extraordinary talent, for a person not born in France, of writing poetry, and still more extraordinary in a person of your rank, increases and strengthens daily. But what is it that you omit to do? From the art of government to that of music and painting, which of the arts is it that you do not understand? Which of the gifts of nature has not your industry embellished?

And is it then true, sir, that your royal highness has a brother worthy of yourself?—This is very uncommon good fortune; and, if he were not wholly worthy he must become so, after having read the charming epistle of his elder brother. He is the first prince that ever received a similar education.

I believe, sir, one of the electors, your ancestors, was surnamed the Cicero of Germany. Was it not John II.? Your royal highness is well persuaded of my respect for this prince; but I am as well persuaded that John II. did not write in prose like Frederic; and, with respect to verse, I defy all Germany, and almost all France, to write better than that beautiful epistle which begins—

*O vous en qui mon cœur, tendre et plein de retour,
Chéris encor le sang qui lui donna le jour ! **

The word *encor* I think one of the nicest efforts of art in the language. It intimates, with great energy, in two syllables, that the parents are a second time beloved in the brother.

But let it please your royal highness no more to insert a *g* in the word *opinion* ; and deign to restore the word to four syllables, of which it consists.—Such are the occasions on which great princes and men of genius must bow before the pedant. The grandeur of your genius has no influence over syllables, nor have you the power to put a *g* where there is none.

Having mentioned syllables, let me further intreat your royal highness to spell the word *vice* with a *c* and not with *fs*.

Pay but these trifling attentions, and you shall be one of the French academy whenever you please ; and, your dignity apart, would do it great honour. Few of the academicians express themselves so forcibly as my prince, and the reason is he thinks more than they do. Your epistle really contains a picture of calumny worthy of Michael Angelo ; and another of youth such as Albano might have painted.

* Oh thou in whom my heart, tender and full of gratitude, cherishes anew the blood that gave it birth !

How much does your royal highness increase the desire we have to pay our court to you! We have taken measures for our departure in the month of April, and it will be very unfortunate if I should find no small path, on the frontiers of Juliers, which shall conduct me to the feet of your royal highness. Permit me to inform you that we shall probably remain a year in those parts, unless we should be expelled by war. Madame du Chatelet intends to recover all the possessions of her family which are loaded with debts, and this will be a work of time. It will even be necessary to institute a suit at Vienna, and at Brussels, which she will pursue herself, and for which she has already drawn out writings with precision and force equal to what are found in her work on fire. If these affairs should continue in dispute two years, it will not matter; Cirey must be forsaken for two years. Our duty and our serious business are and must be first considerations. And how can we regret Cirey when we shall be nearer Cleves, and a country which will probably be honoured with the presence of your royal highness?

Perhaps, too, we shall intreat your royal highness to delay sending the good wine which it is your generous intentions I should drink. According to all appearance, I shall continue for
some

'Some time to drink Rhenish wine between Liege and Juliers. Your royal highness is too good; you have consulted the physicians for me, and you have deigned to send me a prescription which is superior to all their recipes.

Seated beside a tun of old Tokay,
As vig'rous as returning May,
At Fred'ric's court I'll banish all my care;
But note that Emily be there.

I am, with the most profound respect, admiration, and affection, in which you indulge me, &c.

L E T T E R LXXVI.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Berlin, Jan. 8, 1739 *.

I FLATTERED myself that the epistle on humanity might merit your approbation, because of the sentiments it contains; but I hoped, at the same time, that you would have been kind enough to criticise the poetry and the style. I, therefore, intreat the able phi-

* The Berlin edition dates January 10th.

loopher and the great poet further to condescend to act the rigid grammarian, out of friendship for me. I shall not feel averse to amend poetry the subject of which has pleased the marchioness; and by my docility in following your corrections you will judge of the pleasure I find in amendment.

May my epistle on humanity be the harbinger of the work which you have projected! I shall think myself sufficiently rewarded should my epistle be the precursor of yours. Pursue the same road, and do not think that any ill-placed self-love will render me blind to the defects of my own productions. Humanity is an inexhaustible subject. I have but stammered out my thoughts; from you they will flow with ease and precision.

It should seem we strengthen ourselves in an opinion after having thought over all the reasons by which it can be supported. I was thus determined to treat on the subject of humanity, which I hold to be the only virtue, and that it ought to be principally the attribute of those who are distinguished by rank in the world. A sovereign, great or small, may be regarded as a man whose office it is to yield relief, as much as is in his power, to human misery. He is like the physician who cures, not the diseases of
body,

body, but, the misfortunes of his subjects. The voice of the unfortunate, the groans of the wretched, the cries of the oppressed, ought to reach his ear; and, whether in pity to others or from a certain retrospect to self, it is necessary he should be affected by the distress of those whose affliction he himself is a witness of; and, if his heart contain but a small portion of pity, the unhappy will find in him all that sympathy of which they stand in need.

A prince is, relatively to his people, what the heart is relatively to the mechanical structure of the body; it receives blood from all the members, and returns it back to the extremities. The prince receives the fidelity and obedience of his subjects; and he returns them abundance, prosperity, peace, and every thing which can contribute to the welfare and increase of society.

Such are the maxims which I think must naturally take birth in the hearts of all men: but little reasoning is necessary to make them felt, nor need we go through any long course of ethics for their acquirement. I think compassion, and the wish to relieve any one who has need of relief, are innate virtues in most men. We picture to ourselves our own infirmities and wretchedness, when we view those of others;
and

and we are equally prompt to afford succour as we should be to ask it ourselves, were we in the same situation. Tyrants usually sin by considering things under a certain point of view; they only contemplate the world as they are affected by the world; and, because they are superior to certain vulgar distresses, their hearts are insensible of them. When they oppress their subjects, when they are severe, violent, and cruel, it is because they are unacquainted with the ill they do; and because, not having suffered, they think too lightly of pain. Such men by no means resemble Mutius Scævola, who, while burning his hand in the presence of Porfenna, felt all the force of the fire in that part of his body.

In a word, the whole human œconomy inspires humanity. The general resemblance which there is among men, their equality of condition, the indispensable need which they have of each other, their miseries, which strengthen the ties that are formed by their wants, that natural inclination which each being feels for its likeness, self preservation which preaches humanity, in fine, all nature seems to unite to inculcate that as a duty in us which, constituting our happiness, daily adds new sweets to life.

This I think is quite sufficient with respect to
the

the morality of benevolence. I imagine I behold you yawn twice, as you read this verbose declamation, while the marchioness grows impatient. She really has reason so to do, for you know better than I every thing which can be said on the subject; and, what is more, you practise what you know.

We here feel all the effects of extreme frost; the cold is excessive. I never go into the air that I do not tremble lest some nitrous particle should extinguish in me the principle of heat. I request you would tell the marchioness that I earnestly entreat her to send me a little of that fire which renders her genius so splendid; she must have some to spare, and I am in great want. Should she be in need of ice, I promise to furnish her with a quantity sufficient to keep water frozen during all the heats of summer.

Doctissimus Jordanus * has not yet read the essay of the marchioness. I am not prodigal of your favours, and there are people who even accuse me of an excess of avarice. But Jordan shall read the essay on fire, since the marchioness consents; and he will tell you himself, if so it shall him please, what his feelings will be on

* The Berlin reads—*Doctissime, Je n'ai pas vu, &c. i. e. Oh most learned! I have not yet seen, &c.* But the prince had not only seen but sent his remarks. T.

reading the work. All that I can previously assure you of is that we are none of us imbued with prejudice. Descartes, Leibnitz, Newton, and Emily, appear to us so many *great men*, who yield us information in the degree of the ages in which they lived.

The marchioness will have the advantage which the beauty of her sex gives over ours, when eloquence is necessary.

With wit like hers 'tis easy to persuade
That all is truth the godlike Newton said ;
But there's a truth which needs less art to prove,
The truth is this, that she was form'd for love ;
And that, beholding her, the bosom feels
More than the power of language e'er reveals.

Had the Graces been presidents of the academy they would not have failed to have bestowed the laurel with their own hands on the work. But it should seem that the academicians, too much attached to old forms and customs, do not love novelty ; the reason of which is the fear of being obliged to study subjects with which they are but imperfectly acquainted. I imagine to myself an old academician who, having grown grey in the harness of Descartes, beholds a new opinion started, when he is decrepid, and his cares almost ended. Such a man, having habitually learned the articles of
philoso-

philosophic faith, is accustomed to his own manner of thinking; with this he is satisfied, and desires that every body should be the same. How! Become a disciple at the age of fifty or sixty, and be exposed to the shame of studying himself, after having so long taught others? From a huge flambeau, as he was, to be reduced to a small rush light, or rather to see his light totally extinguished! This is a kind of reasoning he would not understand. It is more short to decry a new system than to examine it; and there is even heroic fortitude in opposing every kind of innovation, and in supporting ancient dogmas.

Another order of minds reason after another manner. They, in their simplicity, exclaim—Such was the opinion of our fathers; and why should we think differently? Are we superior to them? Were not they happy in following the system of Aristotle, or of Descartes; and why should we distract our brains with studying the systems of upstarts? Men of this kind always oppose the progress of knowledge; it therefore is not astonishing that the progress of knowledge is so slow.

As soon as I shall return to Remusberg, I will plunge deep into philosophy: I am indebted for this resolution to the marchioness.

I am

I am likewise preparing another difficult and hazardous enterprize; but what it is you shall not know, till I have first tried my strength. The king, to my misfortune, goes this spring into Prussia, whither I am to accompany him. It seems to be the will of fate that we should play at cross purposes, and, in despite of all I have been able to plan, I cannot yet foresee when we shall meet; be it when it may, it will be too tardy for my wishes; of this I hope you are well convinced, and likewise of all the sentiments with which I remain, &c.

L E T T E R LXXVII.

From the Prince Royal.

Berlin, January 20, 1739.

AMONG the Pagans, offerings were made to the Gods of the first fruits of the fields and orchards; among the people of Israel the first-born were consecrated to the God of Jacob; and in the holy Roman church, not only first fruits and children but whole kingdoms are devoted to patron saints. Witness the abdication of Saint Louis, in favour of the Virgin Mary.

For my own part I have neither the first fruits of fields, of orchards, or of children, nor have I kingdoms to present ; but I dedicate to you the first fruits of my poetry, of the year 1739. Were I a pagan, I should invoke you by the name of Apollo ; were I a Jew, you would perhaps be mistaken for the royal prophet, and his son ; or were I a papist, you might become my saint and confessor. But, being neither, I am satisfied with most philosophically esteeming you ; with admiring you as a philosopher, cherishing you as a poet, and respecting you as a friend.

I only wish you health, for you have need of nothing else. The inheritor of superior genius, capable of equalling your own wishes, and of rendering yourself happy, and, in addition to this, the possessor of Emily, what could my wishes add to your felicity !

Recollect that under a zone somewhat more frigid than yours, in a country to which barbarism lives neighbour, and in a solitary place retired from the world, a friend resides who dedicates his vigils to you, and who never ceases offering up prayers for your welfare.

LET-

L E T T E R LXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Cirey, January 18, 1739.

YOUR royal highness is more Frederic and more Marcus Aurelius than ever. Agreeable things drop from your pen with a facility which astonishes me. Your pastoral letter is sent by a most benevolent bishop. You well prove that those who are destined to be kings are really the Lord's anointed. Your catechism is always that of reason and happiness. Fortunate is your flock, sir; the fold at Cirey receives your words with great edification.

Your royal highness advises, that is to say commands, me to finish the age of Louis XIV. I shall obey, and even shall endeavour to enlighten it with that kind of circumspection which shall not be to the detriment of truth, but which shall not render it odious. Neither is my great end that of political and military history; but rather of arts, commerce, laws, and in a word of the human mind. There is no dangerous truth in any of these; nor do I think I ought to bar up a road so spacious and
so

so safe because there is a small part of the way in which I may stumble. That part which is in the possession of your royal highness will never be seen by any other person. The vulgar are not to be treated like my prince.

I have corrected the history of Charles XII. according to several documents which have been communicated to me by a servant of king Stanislaus; but more especially according to those which your royal highness has deigned to send me. I have extracted nothing from the curious details with which you have honoured me, except what ought to be known by all, without offence to any; the population of countries, new laws, new establishments, new cities, commerce, police, and public manners. But with respect to the individual acts of the czar, the czarina, and the czarowitz, I am profoundly silent. I name no person; I cite no person; not only because it is no part of my subject, but because I would not make use of a passage of the gospel, if it had been cited by your royal highness to me, without your express permission. I am correcting the *Henriade*, and intend the first opportunity I have of sending it, to submit my alterations to the judgment of your royal highness. I am also correcting all my tragedies, and have written a new act to

Brutus ; for it is necessary I should correct myself, to be worthy of my prince and Emily.

I shall not print *Merope*, because I am not yet satisfied with it ; but I am requested to write a new tragedy ; a tragedy all of love, and not of gallantry ; a tragedy which may make the women weep, and be parodied at the Italian theatre. I am writing it, and have been this week past *. I shall be laughed at ; but in the mean time I am considerably retouching the elements of *Newton*. It is my duty to neglect nothing, and I wish the work to be as complete and intelligible as possible.

I have sent you, sir, an exact account, of all the labours of your subject of *Cirey* ; though really I ought not to forget the new persecution I am suffering, from *Rouffseau* and the abbé *Desfontaines*. While I am passing days and nights in solitude and the most assiduous labour, I am persecuted at *Paris*, and calumniated and treated in a manner the most outrageously cruel.

The marchioness du *Chatelet* has imagined that *Thiriot*, who often sends whatever is written against me to every body, may also have sent your royal highness an intolerable libel, by the abbé *Desfontaines*. This she has the more reason to believe because she has written a true

* *Zulima*.

state of the case to Thiriot, and he has returned no answer. The generous heart of madame du Chatelet, a heart worthy of yourself, has immediately taken fire : she has written to your royal highness, and will let you understand her complaints from her own mouth ; complaints which mine is forbidden to utter. The true state alluded to is as follows :

The chevalier de Mouhy, who has before written against the abbé Desfontaines, wrote a small literary pamphlet against him, and in this pamphlet he inserted a letter which I wrote two years ago. In this letter, I cited a well-known fact ; which was that the abbé Desfontaines, saved by me from fire, had, as a reward, immediately written a libel against his benefactor, and of this Thiriot was a witness. This is exactly conformable to truth, and exceedingly dishonourable to letters.

Whether Thiriot on this occasion dreads the new venom of the abbé Desfontaines, or whether he has more fear of this mad dog than he has love for his friend, are things of which I am ignorant. It is long since I have heard from him, and I pardon his not committing himself for me. I have written a short apologetic memoir in answer to the abbé Desfontaines ; madame du Chatelet has sent it your

royal highness, and I have since greatly corrected it. I employ no abusive terms. It is not against the abbé Desfontaines, it is only in my own defence; and I have endeavoured to intersperse somewhat of literature, in order that the public may not be fatigued by personalities*.

But I perceive how much I must fatigue your royal highness by being thus prolix. What a subject for a great prince! Yet the gods sometimes interfere in the follies of men; and heroes are spectators of the battle of the frogs.

I am, sir, with the most profound respect, the tenderest and most inviolable attachment, &c.

L E T T E R LXXIX.

From the Prince Royal.

Berlin, January 27, 1739.

WITH strides terrific, and with brandish'd dart,
Death, grisly spectre, threat'ning onward came;
Pain was his guide, abhorrent, hideous fiend,
And groans, and writhes, and tortures, hell-born hags,

* This paper is found among Voltaire's literary miscellanies, under the title of *Memoires sur la Satire*.

Shrieking, advanc'd to do his dire commands,
 And gnaw, with wolfish teeth, the web of life.
 Gasping Infirmary for Pity call'd,
 Unceasing call'd, but call'd, alas, in vain !
 Eternal Night threw back her ebon gates,
 While I, propell'd, was hurried tow'rd the gulph !
 None of his terrors did the shadowy king
 Omit to marshal; all appear'd, and grinn'd,
 And howl'd, and harrow'd up th'expiring soul !
 Sinking I saw myself ! The cords of life
 Were torn by all that Fury could inflict.
 The heart no longer labour'd with its load.
 Vanish'd the world ; extinct the light of day ;
 And Hope, which earliest childhood saw my friend
 Unshaken, cruelly forsook my side !
 In endless torments, and in mortal pangs,
 I only wish'd the last remaining glow,
 The poor, the single spark, should disappear ;
 That Death his rage insatiate might appease,
 And call away his pestive dogs of hell !

Who was my champion ? My deliv'rer, who ?
 Oh jocund Youth ! With renovating life
 Full to overflowing, bounteous thou didst pour
 Thy vivifying spirit thro' my veins !
 Thou radiant to the combat camest, nought fearing ;
 Thy beaming visage Death, grim goblin, saw ;
 Knew thy puissance, thine, his deadliest foe,
 And from the conflict mutt'ring shrunk, abash'd.

Yes ! Once again, belov'd Voltaire, I live ;
 Once more my heart to thee and friendship beats,
 Me to those bow'rs of bliss rapt Fancy bears,
 Where Emily and thou, on themes sublime,
 Sit and converse ; this vague earth rendering heav'n !

Oh bitter thought, that but renews my pangs !
Redouble all my tortures, mighty Gods !
Rack the retreating, tear the trembling nerves,
Ye who the thunder whirl : exhaust your wrath ;
Take back the soul you gave, I'll not repine,
Grant only, ere I die, my longing eyes
May view your wondrous work, your own Voltaire !

These forty and odd verses are to inform you that I have had a dreadful cramp in the stomach, which two days since was in danger of depriving you of a friend, who is as sincerely attached to you as it is possible for man to be. My youth has saved me ; the quacks say it was their remedies. For my own part, I believe it was my impatience to see you, before I die. I had the night before, at going to bed, read a very ill written ode by Rousseau, addressed to posterity. This gave me the colic, and I am afraid lest it should give our poor descendants the plague : it is certainly the most miserable work that ever fell into my hands.

I think myself exceedingly flattered, by your approbation of the last epistle which I sent. You give me great pleasure, by correcting my faults ; and I will use every endeavour to correct my orthography, which is very bad ; but I fear I shall not soon acquire all the precision which is requisite. It is my defect to write too fast, and to be too indolent to copy what I have written.

written. I promise you, however, to exert myself to the utmost ; that you may have no reason to write a dialogue, in the style of Lucian, of letters pleading before the judgment seat of Vaugelas, and complaining of the injuries I have done them.

If by self-correction aptitude may be acquired, if application can teach to do better, and if the masters of the art shall not grow weary of instructing their disciples, I may then affirm that, with your aid, I shall one day write verses less vile than those which I scribble at present.

I imagine the marchioness du Chatelet was very seriously employed in experimental philosophy, and in company. It is the property of the sciences to impart a justness of understanding, which prevents its abuse. I love to hear that a young lady has sufficient power over her passions to sacrifice all her inclinations to her duty ; but I still more admire a philosopher who forsakes retreat, and tranquillity, in favour of friendship. Such are the examples with which Cirey shall furnish posterity, and which will do infinitely more honour to philosophy than the abdication of that singular woman who descended from the throne of Sweden, to go and live in a palace, at Rome.

The sciences ought to be considered as the

means by which we acquire the utmost capability, for the performance of our duties. Those persons by whom they are cultivated have most method in all they do, and act with most consistency. The philosophic spirit establishes principles, which are the sources of reasoning, and the cause of congruity in action. I am not astonished that you inhabitants of Cirey act as you ought to do ; but I should be very much astonished were you not so to act ; considering the depth of your knowledge, and the sublimity of your genius.

I beg you to inform me of your departure for Bruffels, and at the same time of what will be the shortest mode of expediting our correspondence. I flatter myself I shall receive letters from you every week, when you shall be so near our frontiers. Perhaps I might be of some use to you in this country, for I am very particularly acquainted with the prince of Orange, who is often at Breda, and the duke of Aremberg, who lives at Bruffels. Perhaps also, by the intervention of the prince of Lichtenstein, I could abridge the tediousness of delay, which the marchioness might else suffer, at Bruffels, and Vienna. The judges of these countries are in no haste, in passing sentence. It is said that, if the imperial court owes any one a kick, he must

must solicit three years before he can obtain payment, Hence I augur that the affairs of the marchioness will not be terminated so soon as she herself might wish.

The Hungarian wine will follow you wherever you go; it is much more proper for you than Rhenish, which I intreat you not to drink, because of its unwholesomeness.

Do not forget me, dear Voltaire; and whenever your health will permit, let me hear news of yourself, your critical remarks, and your works. You have so accustomed me to your productions that I scarcely can be satisfied with the writings of others. I burn with impatience to see the end of the age of Louis XIV. The work is incomparable, but beware of committing it to the press.

L E T T E R LXXX.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Berlin, Feb. 3, 1739 *.

YOU receive my works with too much indulgence: your prejudice, in favour of their

* February the 2d, in the Beclip edition,

author,

author, occasions you to overlook their weak parts, and the errors with which they abound. I am the Prometheus of the fable ; I steal some part of your divine fire, with which I animate my feeble productions. But the difference between the ancient fable and the present truth is that the soul of Voltaire, much more grand and magnanimous than that of the sovereign of the Gods, does not condemn me to the punishment which was endured, by the author of the celestial theft.

My not yet re-established health prevents me from writing certain works which I have meditated ; and the physician, more cruel even than the disease, daily condemns me to take exercise ; which time is subtracted from the hours devoted to study. The empirics wish to forbid me the acquirement of knowledge ; they will soon not suffer me to think. But, after an exact statement of debtor and creditor, I would rather have a sickly body than a sickly mind. Unfortunately, the mind only seems to be an accessory of the body. Whenever the organization of our machine is out of order, so is the mind ; nor can matter suffer without mind participating in its sufferings. This strict union, this intimate connection, seems to me a very strong proof, in favour of the opinion of Locke. That which thinks in us is certainly an effect,

or

or a result, of the mechanism of our animated machine. Every man of sense, every man who has not imbibed either prejudice or self-love, must acknowledge this truth.

In order to give you an account of my occupations, I must inform you that I have made some progress in physics. I have seen all the experiments of the air pump, and have indicated two new experiments. The first is, to put an open watch in the pump, to know whether its motion would be accelerated, retarded, unaffected, or whether it would stop. The second relates to the productive virtue of the air. A portion of earth is to be taken, in which a pea is to be planted. This is to be enclosed in the recipient, from which the air is to be pumped; and I imagine the pea will not grow; which I attribute to the productive virtue of the air, and that power which develops seed.

I have further proposed a question to our academicians. An idea has struck me concerning the cause of winds, which I have communicated to them, and our celebrated Kirch will be able to inform me, at the end of a year, whether my assertion be well founded, or whether I am deceived. I will briefly state the question.

The momentum of the wind can only proceed from two causes; the pressure and the

motion of the air. The reason that we have more storms toward the winter solstice, I affirm, is that the sun is nearer the earth, and that its pressure upon our hemisphere produces high winds : and, further, the earth being in its perihelion, must have a stronger motion according to the inverse ratio of the square of its distance ; which motion, having an influence on the parts of the air, must necessarily be productive of winds, and tempests.

The other winds may originate in the other planets, with which we shall be in the perigæum. Beside that, when the sun attracts much humidity from the earth, these vapours, which arise and are collected in the middle region of the air, may in like manner occasion, by their pressure, winds and whirlwinds. Mr. Kirch will exactly observe the situation of our earth, relative to the planetary system ; will remark the clouds, and carefully examine, that he may find whether I have assigned the true cause of high winds.

Enough of physics. With respect to poetry, I had formed a plan, but of so extensive a nature that, when I coolly consider, it terrifies me. Would you believe that I have projected a tragedy ? The subject is taken from the *Æneid*. The action is to represent the tender and con-

stant friendship of Nisus and Euryalus. I propose to myself to end my subject in three acts ; and I had arranged and digested the materials, when I was taken ill : since when Nisus and Euryalus have appeared to me more formidable than ever.

For your own part, my dear friend, you are to me an incomprehensible being. I doubt whether there be such a person as Voltaire in the world ! I have formed a system, to deny his existence. It certainly cannot be one man, who performs the prodigious labours which are attributed to M. de Voltaire. There is an academy, at Cirey, composed of men selected from the whole earth ; among whom there are philosophers, who translate Newton ; heroic poets ; writers of tragedy ; some that equal Catullus ; others Thucydides ; and the works of this academy are published under the name of Voltaire : like as the acts of a whole army are attributed to the chief, by whom it is commanded. Fable tells us of a giant with a hundred arms ; you have a thousand minds. You wish to encircle the globe which Atlas bears. The prodigious severity of your labours, I own, incites my fears. Do not forget that, though your genius be immense, your body is exceedingly frail. Let me entreat you to pay some
respect

respect to the feelings of your friends, and do not render your land barren by a forced tillage. The vivacity of your mind injures your health; and your extraordinary industry preys upon your life.

Since you promise to send me the passages of the *Henriade*, which you have corrected, let me request you to add your criticisms on those which you have expunged. I am inclined to have the *Henriade* engraved, when you shall have sent me the alterations which you have thought proper to make, like the edition of Horace, that has been engraved at London. Knobelsdorf, who draws very well, will make designs for the plates; and the ode to Maupertuis may be added, together with the moral epistles, and other of your pieces, which are dispersed in various publications. Let me beg you would tell me your opinion, and what is your wish.

It is disgraceful, it is shameful to France, that you should be persecuted with impunity. It is the duty of the masters of the earth to administer justice, and to recompense and support virtue against oppression, and the calumnies of vice. My indignation is incited to think no person undertakes to oppose the fury of your enemies. The whole nation ought to take
part,

part, in the quarrel of him who labours only for the fame of his country ; and who is almost the only man who does honour to his age. Persons who think justly despise the defamatory libel which has appeared, and hold the abominable authors of it in horror. But such writings cannot injure your reputation : they are barbleſs arrows ; ſlander too atrocious to be eaſily believed.

I have written to Thiriot whatever it is neceſſary he ſhould know, and the advice which has been ſent him, relative to his conduct, he, I hope, will profit by. You know that I and the marchioneſs are your beſt friends ; commit therefore, your defence to us, whenever you are attacked. Not that we could acquit ourſelves with equal eloquence, wit, and dignity, as you could yourſelf : but whatever we ſay will come with greater force ; becauſe a friend, angered at the wrong a friend has received, may ſay many things which the moderation of the perſon offended ought to ſuppreſs. The public itſelf is ſooner moved, by the complaints of a compaſſionate friend than of an injured man, who calls for vengeance. I am not indifferent to any thing which affects you ; and I zealouſly intereſt myſelf in the felicity of him who applies
himſelf

himself incessantly to afford me pleasure, and instruction.

L E T T E R LXXXI.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

February 15, 1739.

I HAVE received your new-year's gift. I sent one, like a subject, to your royal highness; a return to which you have made, like a monarch. Your undated letter; your charming verses,

Quelque demon malicieux

*Se joue, assurément, du monde; etc. **

have dissipated the clouds which obscured the serene firmament of Cirey. Vexation comes from Paris, and consolation from Remusberg. In the name of our master, Apollo, deign to inform me, sir, how you have acquired so perfect a knowledge of conditions of life which seem so very distant from your sphere of action. By the aid of what microscope has the heir of a great monarchy been able to distinguish all

* Some malicious demon assuredly sports with the world, &c.
the

the shades which checker common life ? These are subjects with which princes are totally unacquainted ; but you are a man, as well as a prince.

The abbé Alari asked permission of our king, one day, to go into the country for a short time, and to depart immediately. What, said the king ; is your coach and six ready at the door ? The king imagined that every man had a coach and six at least.

You induce me to believe in the metempsychosis, sir ; your soul must have long inhabited the body of some amiable private person ; a Rochefoucault, or a La Bruyere. What a picture of the rich, overburdened by their insipid happiness ; and of the quarrels and afflictions that trouble those marriages which, in appearance, are most fortunate ! What a crowd of ideas and images ! Apply but a small farthing file and how perfect will be the workmanship of your sterling ore ! You create ; I do but correct. And this is the reason why I dare not yet send your royal highness my new tragedy ; but I take the liberty to present a short extract, which I have lately retouched, from the *Henriade*.

The marchioness du Chatelet has just received a letter from your royal highness, which af-

fords good proof that Remusberg is soon to become an academy of sciences. I must be highly enamoured of truth indeed to allow that Emily may be deceived; yet truth is more potent even than kings; nay, even than Emily.

I think you are very right, sir, concerning the fire excited by a west wind. Had men waited till Boreas should warm them, they would have been in great danger of perishing with cold. The highest winds, by passing through the branches of trees, lose much of their force. Should these branches be dry, they would fall: should they be green, friction to eternity would never produce a spark. It is much more probable that thunder, rather than wind, should have occasioned the conflagration of forests, and the various volcanoes, with which the earth abounds, were our first furnaces*.

The memoir, in other respects, is full of curious researches, and thoughts equally bold and philosophic. It is the system of Boerhaave, of Musschenbroeck, and often that of Nature. Our academy has given a prize to one man for having said that fire is composed of bubbles †; and

* See Letter VIII. from the Prince Royal to the marchioness du Chatelet. T.

† To Euler——The prize however was not given, by the academy,

and to another for affirming it is a cylindrical machine. Such is the taste of our nation. He who borders on romance will be preferred to the person who studies nature. For this reason, I will not have Merope acted; but I am preparing a very romantic tragedy. When we are in the land of Harlequin, we must wear a Harlequin's jacket, and a black mask.

*Me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
Auspiciis, et sponte mea componere curas!*

Did I live under the government of my prince, I would compose no such works; but endeavour to conform to his masculine and vigorous manner of thinking. I would kindle my expiring fire by the sparks of his genius. But what can I do in France, ill and persecuted as I am, and ever disturbed by the dread that envy and persecution will at length be my destruction? The desert in which I have taken refuge, in company with Minerva, who, under the figure of madame du Chatelet, is become my patroness, this desert, which should be inaccessible to persecutors, has not prevented their fury from coming thither, in search of a lan-

academy, for this hypothesis of bubbles; but for a very excellent formula, for the propagation of sound.

H h 2

guishing

guishing hermit, who only exists for your royal highness, Emily, and study.

I am with the most profound respect, most tender attachment, &c.

L E T T E R LXXXII.

From M. de Voltaire.

Cirey, February 26, 1736

I.

OH fearful tidings! woe of woes!
The hero whom all hearts adore,
The hope and idol of the world,
Perhaps, oh grief! is now no more!

II.

Some envious Fiend, on mischief bent,
Would nip the beauteous rose in bloom.
Some haggard Fury, hating man,
Opens and points toward the tomb.

III.

God of the healing art, descend!
Ye Muses, leave your heav'nly sphere!
Oh haste, ye Virtues, haste, and aid
The prince in whom we you revere!

IV.

Descend and close the gaping grave;
Let him not fall a sacrifice!

In him ye splendid live and reign ;
With him your hope, your glory die.

V.

Ev'n at the flaming mount of God,
In bitter grief, Earth loudly cried—
“ Sap my foundations, or restore
“ My hope, my blessing, and my pride !

VI.

“ Thou know’st, Oh God ! that, languid, weak,
“ With many a crime my bosom stain’d,
“ Since this high boon thou hast bestow’d,
“ Of ills I’ve never once complain’d.”

VII.

Heav’n kindly heard the prayer of Earth ;
The Loves and Graces hither sped ;
Pallas and blest Hygeia smil’d,
And Death and all his Demons fled !

VIII.

Rival of all the mighty dead !
Heroic heart of mould divine !
If yet I form a wish to live,
It is to think that heart is mine !

IX.

Born to misfortune, I’m the sport
Of hateful Envy, foolish Zeal ;
Nor, during my poor dregs of life,
Can e’er the wounds they gave me heal.

X.

But, what though friends ungrateful prove,
Or cowards falter, I forgive ;
Heav’n has large recompense in store,
And this I ask—Let Frederic live !

You must excuse these spiritless verses, sir, which the heart dictated at the moment of that fear in which I still remain, from the recollection of your danger, and from the joy which I at the same moment felt, when, by your own hand, I was informed of your resurrection.

Your royal highness then resembles the swan of yore, which sung dying! How exquisite, sir, was the consolation I received, from your verses! The stamina of life must be great indeed in a man who could write thus, immediately after a disease like that of the cramp in the stomach! And how profuse, sir, are your favours! I have no protectors, but you and Emily; and your royal highness not only deigns to love me, but is desirous that others should likewise love me. What are others to me? I shall not have the unfortunate weakness to seek applause from Vadius, when I am honoured by the bounties of Frederic. But, the mischief is, the implacable hatred of Vadius is often followed by the persecution of Sejanus.

I remain in France because madame du Chatelet is there; otherwise a more profound retreat should long since have concealed me, from persecution and envy. I do not hate my country: I respect and love the government under which I was born. My only wish is to be able

to pursue my studies, with more tranquillity and less fear.

Did the abbé Desfontaines, and those of his stamp, who persecute me, remain satisfied with defamatory libels, these might be endured : but there is no engine which they do not set in motion to procure my ruin. They sometimes circulate scandalous writings, which they impute to me ; at others, anonymous letters to ministers ; tales forged at will by Rousseau, and commented upon by Desfontaines. Bigots join the party, and, with the zealous semblance of religion, mask the fury with which they seek to injure me. I am daily in dread of losing my liberty, or my life ; and, languid, as I am, in solitude, and unable to defend myself, I am abandoned by those very persons to whom I have done most good, and who think it their interest to betray me. Some corner, in Holland, England, Swisserland, or elsewhere, might shelter me from the storm ; but a most respectable lady has deigned to attach her happy life to my unfortunate existence. She softens every chagrin I feel, though she has not been able to calm my fears.

While I could, I concealed from your royal highness my afflicting situation ; notwithstanding the goodness with which you yourself

have deigned to bewail it: I wished to spare your generous mind such disagreeable reflections. I thought only of the sciences, in which you delight; I forgot the author, whom you have deigned to love. But longer to have kept secret the state in which I am would have been to have betrayed my protector. I have described it as it is. Horace says—

Durum, sed levius fit patientiâ;

and I say—

Durum, sed levius fit per Fredericum.

Your royal highness also has promised your protection, in behalf of the affairs which madame du Chatelet has to discuss, on the confines of your territories. She thanks you, sir; and she alone is able to thank you properly, for such benefits. Is it possible that your royal highness should be in Prussia, when we shall be near Cleves? I hope, at least, that we shall be there long enough at length to see *salutare meum*.

I am, with profound respect, &c.

LETTER LXXXIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

SIR,

February 28, 1739.

I RECEIVED the letter of your royal highness, dated February the 23d, and sent my answer by the same way. We immediately tried the experiment of the watch in the recipient. The privation of air did not affect its motion, which depends on the spring. The watch is now under the bell; and I think I perceive the balance may perhaps go a little faster, being more free in vacuum; but the increase of motion is very small, and probably depends on the nature of the watch. It is evident, from the experiment, that the air has no effect on the spring: and, with respect to the subtle matter of Descartes, I am his very humble servant! If this matter, this torrent of vortexes, proceed in one direction, how can the springs composed of them operate in every direction? Nay, indeed, what are these vortexes?

But what are machines, or air pumps to me? I am most interested, sir, in your machine; in the health of that amiable body which is the abode of so beautiful a mind. And am I, at last,

last, obliged to say to your royal highness what you have so often said to me? Be careful of yourself: be less severe in your labours. This you say, sir, to a man whose preservation is useless to the world; and I repeat it to one on whom the happiness of mankind depends. Can it be possible, sir, that your accident has been attended by such effects?

I have done myself the honour to write to M. Plœtz. I have also directed immediately to yourself. Alas! I cannot be of the number of those who wait around your person. Nisus and Euryalus would perhaps be more amusing to you, in your convalescence, than subjects of calculation. I am not astonished that the hero of friendship should choose such a theme. I impatiently expect the first scenes. Scipio, Cæsar, Augustus, wrote tragedies; *cur non Fredericus?*

Your royal highness does me too much honour: you oppose my misfortunes with too many bounties. I have made so many alterations, in the *Henriade*, that I shall be obliged to send you the work entire, with the corrections. If you will give me your commands, concerning the mode in which it may be conveyed, they shall be executed. I am too happy, in despite of my enemies. I return you a
thousand

thousand thanks : my heart is affected by all you have deigned to say ! How much should I prattle, if the deplorable state of my health would permit me to write more ! Behold me at your feet, sir ; the little breath I have is all for Emily, and my tutelary deity.

I am, with the most profound respect, and the tenderest gratitude, &c.

L E T T E R LXXXIV.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remusberg,
March 8, 1739 *.

SINCE the last letter I wrote to you, my health has been so indifferent that I have not been able to work at any thing whatever. Idleness is to me much more insupportable than labour and disease. But we are formed of a morsel of clay ; and it would be supremely ridiculous in us to expect a great degree of health, from a machine which naturally must be often out of order, and which is obliged to wear itself away, finally to perish.

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

I see,

I see, by your letter, you are in a good train to correct your works. I greatly regret that some grains of this sage criticism have not alighted upon the piece which I have sent to you. I should not have exposed it to the sun, but with an intent that it should be purified. I do not expect praises from Cirey; they are not my due: but I expect hints, and sage advice; these you certainly owe me, and I beg you would pay no regard to my self-love.

I have read the extract from the *Henriade*, which you have corrected, with infinite pleasure. It is beautiful! Sublime! I notwithstanding with I had written that which you have expunged. I imagine it is my fate to feel, more strongly than others, the beauties with which you adorn your works. The fine verses which I have just read have again animated me, with the sacred fire of Apollo. Such is the power of your genius, that it is sympathetic at the distance of more than two hundred leagues. I will again string my lute, to produce new harmony.

There is no doubt of your success, in the new tragedy you are writing. When you speak of fame, we imagine we listen to Julius Cæsar: when you discourse of humanity, nature seems delivering her own dictates; and, if love be the subject, we imagine we hear the tender Anacreon,

or

or the divine songster who sighed for Lesbia. In a word, you want nothing but that tranquillity of mind which, with all my heart, I wish you enjoyed, to succeed and produce miracles of every kind.

It is not astonishing that the Royal Academy should have preferred some bad philosophical works, to the excellent essay of the marchioness. How many are the impertinencies uttered by philosophy! How various are the absurdities of the human mind, in the schools! What paradox was ever broached, which has not found supporters? Men have always been addicted to the false. I know not by what caprice it should happen that truth should continually appear to them the least striking. Prejudice, vanity, and a superficial mind, will, I believe, in all ages, be enemies to the progress of science: and it is very natural that the literati, by profession, should find a difficulty in receiving laws from a young and lovely lady; whom they all acknowledge the object of their admiration, in the kingdom of the Graces; but whom they refuse to acknowledge, as an example for study, in the land of science.

You render a truly philosophic homage to truth. Those interests, those reasons, small or great, those thick clouds which usually darken

the vulgar eye, have no influence over you; and truths approach as much nearer your intelligence as the stars, which are viewed through a telescope, become more clearly manifest to the sight. It were to be wished that men were all superior to corruption, error and deceit; and that truth and good taste should serve as general rules, in serious compositions, and works of wit: but how few of the learned are capable of sacrificing the prejudices of esteem, the power of beauty, and the force of friendship, to truth! A vigorous mind is necessary, to vanquish opponents so puissant: and the triumph which, on such an occasion, is gained, over friendship, is greater than that gained over self. The winds are, as you allow, properly confined in the cave of Æolus, from which, before we take them, I imagine we ought to shew cause.

I have been greatly affected by the persecutions which you endure: they resemble storms, that for a time deprive the ocean of its calm; and I ardently wish I were the Neptune of the Æneid, that I might procure you that tranquillity which I so sincerely wish you to enjoy. Permit me to recal to your memory those two fine lines, in your epistle to Emily, in which you have given yourself so excellent a lesson:

Tranquille

*Tranquille au haut des cieux, que Newton s'est soumis,
Il ignore, en effet, s'il a des ennemis *.*

Take my advice, and leave that contemptible crowd of abject foes, as furious as they are impotent, to crawl beneath you. Your merit and your fame will be your ægis. Envy will in vain pursue you; her darts will be blunted and broken, when hurled against the author of the *Henriade*; in a word, against Voltaire. Let me add, if the intention of your enemies be to injure, you have no reason to fear them, for this they never can do; and, if they only seek to torment you, which is most apparent, you would be very ill advised to give them that satisfaction. Conscious of your merit, and clothed in your virtue, you ought to enjoy that mild and happy peace which is the most desirable thing on earth. Let me entreat you to form such a resolution! I am interested in it; both from friendship and from the part which I take in your health, and existence.

Pray inform me which way, or by whom, I may send you what I have set apart, for yourself and the marchioness: all is ready and packed up. Act openly, and tell me, as I wish, what you find most expedient.

* Tranquilly seated, in the heavens he has subjugated, Newton knows not that he has enemies.

The

The marchioness asks whether I have received the extracts from Newton, which she has made, and I forgot to answer her question: but I beg you to tell her that Thiriot sent it, and that it charmed me; as every thing does which comes from her. In reality, the marchioness is so exigent, she wishes to rob us men of all the advantageous privileges of our sex; and I fear, if she should undertake to command armies, she would put the ashes of Condé and Turenne to shame. Oppose a progress which gives us such a prospect of futurity, and take care at least that some kind of glory shall remain ours.

I am full of projects. If I acquire but a partial return of health, you will be inundated, at Cirey, by my works; like as Italy was overrun by the invasion of the Goths. Let me entreat you to act always as my judge, and not as my panegyrist.

L E T T E R LXXXV.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remusberg,
March 22, 1739.

I WAS in furious haste to discover my philosophical projects. It must be owned, it was very much the act of a young man, to dare

to propose problems to masters in the art, after having acquired a slight knowledge of physics: I blush, make honourable amends, and promise you shall no more hear me speak of perihelion nor aphelion, till I have previously gained information.

Forgive my ignorance, however, when I object to the vacuum which you suppose between the sun and earth. It seems to me that, in what he has written on light, Newton says the rays of the sun are material, and that therefore a vacuum is necessary, in order that these rays may arrive in so short a time. But, if these rays be material and occupy a space so immense, the whole interval will then be full of luminous matter; consequently, there is no vacuum; and the subtle matter of Descartes, or the æther, as it shall please you to call it, is replaced by your light. What then becomes of the vacuum? After this, do not expect a single word more from me, on physics.

I am a volunteer in philosophy. I am well persuaded we never shall penetrate into the secrets of nature; and, remaining neuter between all sects, I can look on without prejudice, and amuse myself at their expence.

I am not equally indifferent to what concerns morality: this is the most necessary branch of

philosophy, and that which contributes most to the happiness of mankind.

Let me beg you to correct the piece I send you on tranquillity. My health has not permitted me to do much; but, in the mean time, I have given this sketch. They are crude ideas, which the hand of an able painter should bring to perfection. I wait my returning powers, to begin my tragedy. I will exert myself to succeed, but I am convinced that the piece, when finished, will be good for nothing, except to paper the hair of the marchioness.

I am meditating a work on Machiavel's prince. These various subjects are revolving in my mind; and the aid of some deity is necessary, to reduce the chaos to order. I impatiently expect the *Henriade*, but I earnestly desire you to send me the criticism of the passages you retrench. Nothing can be more instructive, nothing more capable of forming the taste, than these remarks.

Please to send your letters by the way of Michelet, which is the best. Inform me of the state of your health, I beg; for I am very apprehensive that the persecutions, and continual affairs you have on hand, should render it worse than it is.

I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXXXVI.

From the Prince Royal.

Remusberg, April 15, 1739.

I WAS very sensibly affected by the moving recital, which you have given me, of your deplorable situation. A friend, at some hundreds of leagues distance, apparently, can be but of little utility; yet I mean to make an attempt in your favour, which I hope may in some manner be beneficial. Alas, dear Voltaire, why cannot I offer you an asylum, where most assuredly you should suffer nothing similar to those vexations which are heaped upon you, by your ungrateful country! You would here find neither calumniators, ungrateful, nor envious persons; but men capable of doing justice to your merit, and of distinguishing that which Nature, above all her works, has so highly distinguished.

Would I were able to alleviate your afflictions! I can assure you, I meditate the means of serving you efficaciously. Console yourself as well as you can, my dear friend, and remember that, to maintain an equality of conditions among men, misfortunes were necessary, in

order to balance the advantages you enjoy, of genius, and the friendship of the marchioness.

On occasions like these, it is necessary to obtain that aid from philosophy which may moderate the first transports of grief, and calm the impetuous emotions which chagrin excites in the soul. I know that advice costs nothing; and that the practice of it is almost impossible. I know, too, that the strength of your own mind is sufficient to oppose every calamity. Still, however, the sympathy of friendship may impart consolation and fortitude.

Your adversaries are, indeed, people so contemptible that you certainly should not fear their power to injure your reputation. The teeth of envy are blunted, whenever she attempts to bite you. We need but read the calumnies which are dispersed, concerning you, without partiality, and we shall discover their malice, and infamy. Remain at peace, my dear Voltaire, and wait till you can taste the fruits of my endeavours.

I hope the air of Flanders will occasion you to forget your sufferings; like as the waters of Lethe efface all recollection of pain, among the dead.

I expect to hear from you, to know when it will be agreeable to the marchioness that I should send her a letter, for the duke d'Arenberg,

My

My Hungarian wine and amber languish to depart. I shall send the whole to Bruffels, when I hear you are safely arrived.

Have the goodness to address the letters which you write to me, from Cirey, by way of the trader Michelet, which will be the shortest. But, if you write to me from Bruffels, let it be under the address of general Borck, at Wesel. You will wonder that I should have been so long without answering you; but you will easily unravel the mystery, when you know that a fortnight's absence prevented me from receiving your letter, which lay waiting here for me.

I entreat you would never doubt of the sentiments of friendship and esteem with which I am, &c.

L E T T E R LXXXVII,

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Cirey, April 15, 1739.

DURING the slumbers of Nisus and Euryalus, your royal highness nobly tries your strength in worthy amusements. Your French style is arrived at so great a degree of precision,

and elegance, that I imagine you were born in the Versailles of Louis XIV, that Bossuet and Fenelon were your tutors, and Madame de Sevigné your nurse.

If however you wish to subject yourself to our miserable rules of versification, I shall do myself the honour to inform your royal highness that our timid writers avoid as much as possible the use of the word *croient* in poetry; because, if it be pronounced as two syllables, the result will be the pronunciation is not French, but the sound will resemble *croiint*; and, if pronounced as one syllable, it is too long. Thus, instead of saying

Ils croient reformer, stupides téméraires, &c.

the Apollos of Remusberg may with the same ease say,

*Ils pensent réformer, stupides téméraires. **

But I am infinitely charmed continually to perceive, sir, in your most trifling amusements, an inexhaustible fund of philosophy.

With respect to that other more uncertain branch of philosophy, which we call physics, it will no doubt enter into your sanctuary. Your very objections already afford instruction.

* Rashly stupid, they think to reform, &c.

Rays of light must certainly be material, because they may be divided: they heat, they burn, they go and come; and because they were able to give impulse to a watch spring, placed near the focus of the glass of the prince of Hesse. But whether it be a substance precisely such as that concerning which we have obtained three or four ideas, and whether its properties are the same, this is a subject concerning which we have, hitherto, obtained nothing better than probable conjectures.

As to the space which is filled by the rays of the sun, these rays are so far from forming an absolute plenum, in the road they travel, that the matter which is emitted by the sun, in a year, perhaps does not consist of two cubic feet, and perhaps does not weigh two ounces.

The fact is that Rømer has well demonstrated, in despite of Maraldi, that light travels from the sun to the earth in seven minutes and a half: and, on the other hand, Newton has proved that a body, which moves in a fluid of the same density as itself, loses the half of its motion, after having traversed thrice its diameter, and is soon totally deprived of motion. The result of this is that light, did it penetrate a fluid more dense than itself, would lose its motion much more quickly, and would never arrive at the
 earth;

earth; consequently, it travels through the most absolute space.

Bradley has further discovered that the light which comes from Sirius, to the earth, is not more retarded, in its course, than that of the sun. If this will not prove a vacuum, I know not what will.

Your idea, sir, of refuting Machiavel is much more worthy of a prince, such as you, than that of refuting mere philosophers. The knowledge of man, and his duties, form your chief study. It is for a prince like you to instruct princes; and I will be bold enough most earnestly to entreat your royal highness to adhere to, and execute, this noble plan.

Your continued goodness, sir, to the *Henriade* originates, no doubt, in the ideas which you have there found, that are so opposite to the principles of Machiavel. You have deigned to love an author who is equally the enemy of tyranny and rebellion. Your royal highness is good enough to command me to send you an account of the alterations I have made, and I obey.

The first considerable change is that of the combat between *d'Ally* and his son. It seemed to me that this incident, affecting in itself, was not of sufficient extent; and that the passions would

would not be moved by a slight mention of the subject. I endeavour to follow the excellent example which Virgil affords, in Nisus and Euryalus. If I am not mistaken, it is necessary that characters should appear long enough before the spectator for him to feel some attachment to them. I delight in rapid images, but I also delight occasionally to dwell on pathetic circumstances.

The second most important change is in the tenth book. The combat between Turenne and d'Aumale seemed too hasty. I had avoided the great difficulty, which consists in depicting circumstances; and I have now wrestled with this difficulty. The verses begin as follow:

“O Dieu! cria Turenne, arbitre de mon roi,” &c.

I believe, sir, I am the first poet who has made a simile on the refraction of light; and the first Frenchman who has described a combat, in which the art of fencing forms a part of the description.

*In tenui labor, at tenuis non gloria, si quem
Numina læva sinunt, auditque vocatus Apollo.*

Numina læva are those who persecute me; and *vocatus Apollo* is my protector, at Remusberg. That I may entirely obey my Apollo,
I must

I must further inform him I have retrenched the four following lines, which concluded the first book.

Sur-tout, en écoutant ces tristes aventures,
Pardonnez, grande reine, à des vérités dures
Qu'un autre eût pu vous taire, ou saurait mieux voiler,
Mais que Bourbon jamais n'a pu dissimuler *.

As these disagreeable truths, of which Henry IV. speaks, did not glance at queen Elizabeth, but at kings whom Elizabeth did not love, it is self evident that no apology was necessary to the queen. I had suffered this error to remain too long; and, instead of these lines, I have substituted

Un autre, en vous parlant, pourrait avec adresse, &c.

I have made a little addition to the sixth book, when Potier demands audience, beginning thus :

Il élève la voix ; on murmure, on s'empresse, &c.

I imagined these images were proper to the epic poem, *ut pictura poesis erit.*

In the seventh book, speaking of hell, I add—

* While listening to these mournful adventures, pardon, great queen, truths so disagreeable, which another narrator might have buried in silence, or have veiled, but that Bourbon knows not to dissimble,

Etes-vous

Etes-vous en ces lieux, faibles et tendres cœurs,
 Qui, livrés aux plaisirs, et couchés sur des fleurs,
 Sans fiel et sans fierté, couliez dans la paresse
 Vos inutiles jours, filés par la mollesse ?
 Avec les scélérats seriez-vous confondus,
 Vous, mortels bienfaisans ; vous, amis des vertus ;
 Qui, par un seul moment de doute, ou de faiblesse,
 Avez séché les fruits de trente ans de sagesse * ?

This perhaps, sir, may inspire you with some pity for the poor damned; among whom people so worthy are found. But the most essential change, in my poem, is an invocation, which ought immediately to succeed that which I have made to the stranger deity, Truth. To whom ought I to address myself, if not to her favourite; a prince who loves and is beloved; a prince so dear to me, and so uncommon to the world? Thus, therefore, do I address myself, to this adorable prince, at the beginning of the *Henriade*.

Et toi, jeune héros, toujours conduit par elle,
 Disciple de Trajan, rival de Marc-Aurèle,

* Are you in these abodes, yielding and tender hearts, who, addicted to pleasures, and reclined on beds of flowers, devoid of gall or pride, passed in happy indolence your useless days? And you, beneficent mortals, friends of virtue, do you, for a single moment of doubt and weakness, after thirty years continued wisdom, suffer like the infamous and the wicked?

Citoyen

Citoyen sur le trône, et l'exemple du Nord,
 Sois mon plus cher appui; sois mon plus grand support :
 Laisse les autres rois, ces faux dieux de la terre,
 Porter de toutes partes ou la fraude ou la guerre :
 De leurs fausses vertus laisse les s'honorer :
 Ils désolent le monde, et tu dois l'éclairer *.

I request, on my knees I request, your royal highness will suffer these verses to be printed, in the beautiful edition which you have undertaken of the *Henriade*. Wherefore forbid me, who only write for the promotion of truth, to speak that truth which I hold most precious ?

I expect to send your royal highness something to amuse you, when I come to the Netherlands. I have not omitted to make provision, notwithstanding my illness. The *Apollo* of *Remus* and *Emily* are my supporters.

Madame du Chatelet neither knows how to thank your royal highness nor to have the Hungarian wine directed. It is our intention to depart at the beginning of May, and I will do myself the honour to write to your royal high-

* And thou, youthful hero, by Truth conducted, disciple of *Trajan*, rival of *Marcus Aurelius*, a man, although a king, the example of the North, be thou my dearest best support ! Let other monarchs, those false gods of the earth, propagate war and fraud ; let them glory in their false virtues ! They desolate that world which thou art doomed to enlighten !

ness,

nels, as soon as we shall know which way to steer our course.

As it is necessary to tell our master every thing that concerns us, it is probable that, on our return from the Netherlands, we shall fix our abode at Paris. Madame du Chatelet has lately purchased a house, built by one of the greatest architects of France, and painted by Le Brun and Le Sueur *; a house proper for a philosophic king. It is fortunately so distant, from the fashionable part of the town, that we have purchased that for two hundred thousand livres (eight thousand three hundred pounds) which has cost two millions in building and decorating. This I regard as a second Cirey. The tears swim in my eyes, when I recollect how distant all this is from the states of Marcus-Aurelius-Frederic. Nature committed a great mistake, when she caused me to be born a citizen of Paris. My body only will be there; my soul will ever remain with Emily, and the adorable prince to whom I shall ever pay the most profound respect, and with the permission of your royal highness all the tenderness, &c.

* The Hotel Lambert.

L E T T E R LXXXVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Cirey, April 25, 1739.

I HAVE the honour to send your royal highness the lees of my wine—Here are the corrections of a work which never will be worthy of the singular protection it receives from you. I have done every thing which depended on me ; your august name must perform the rest. Permit, sir, the name of the most enlightened, most generous, and most amiable of princes to shed a splendour over the work, which will embellish its very defects. Indulge this testimony of my tender respect, which cannot be suspected of flattery. This is the only kind of homage which the public approves : in this I am but the interpreter of every one who is acquainted with your genius ; all know I should say as much, were you not the heir of a throne.

I dedicated Zaire to a merchant, in whom I only sought A MAN : he was my friend, and I honoured his virtue. I presume to dedicate the Henriade to a superior spirit ! Prince though
he

he be, I rather delight in his genius than revere his rank.

We shall depart immediately, sir, and I shall do myself the honour to request your royal highness will send me your commands, as soon as that chicanery, which has directed our course, will permit us to have any fixed place of residence. Madame du Chatelet is preparing to contend for small estates, while probably you will contend for greater, in arms. These estates are very near the theatre of that war which I dread.

Mantua va misera nimium vicina Cremona!

I flatter myself that a branch of your laurels, suspended over the gate of the castle of Beringhen, will save it from destruction. Your tall grenadiers will do me no harm, when I shall show them your letters. I shall tell them *non hic in praelia veni*. They understand Virgil, no doubt; and, if they are determined on pillage, I shall exclaim *Barbarus has segetes!* At hearing which, for the first time, they will fly. Let me find any Prussian regiment attempting to stop me! Gentlemen, say I, do you know that your prince is causing my Henriade to be engraved; and that I belong to Emily? The co-

lonel will listen to reason, and ask me to supper ; but unfortunately I never sup.

I was one day taken as a spy, by the soldiers of the regiment of Conti. The prince, their colonel, instead of ordering me to be hanged, invited me to supper. But at present, sir, I am in continual fear lest the powers that be should shew me a cord instead of a bottle. The cardinal de Fleuri formerly loved me, when I used to meet him at the house of the lady of marshal Villars ; *altri tempi altre cure*. It is now the fashion to persecute me, nor can I conceive how some pleasantries, in this letter, have escaped me ; amid the vexations which overwhelm my mind, and the perpetual pains which prey upon my body. But your portrait, to which I continually look up, says,

Macte animo.

*Durum, sed levius fit patientiâ,
Quidquid corrigere est nefas.*

I once again venture to exhort your great genius to honour Virgil, in Nisus and Euryalus ; and to confound Machiavel. It is for you to write the panegyric of friendship ; it is for you to destroy that infamous policy which systematizes vice into virtue. The word policy, in its original signification, meant citizen ; but, at
I present,

present, thanks to our perversity, it means deceiver of citizens. Restore it, sir, to its true signification: teach men to know and revere virtue.

I am labouring to finish a work which I shall do myself the honour to send your royal highness, as soon as my mind is sufficiently at ease. You shall not want my frivolous productions; as long as they can afford you any amusement, they are at your command.

The marchioness du Chatelet never fails to join her homage to mine.

I am, with the utmost respect and veneration,

SIR, &c.

L E T T E R LXXXIX.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Rupin, May 16, 1739*.

I RECEIVED two of your letters almost at the same time, and on the point of my departure for Berlin; so that I have been only able to send a general answer to both. I am infinitely

* Undated in the Berlin edition.

obliged to you, for having communicated the alterations which you have made in your *Henriade*. It is for you only to excel your former excellence. Every alteration which I have read is most excellent, and I never cease wondering at the force which the French language acquires, in your works. Had Virgil been born a citizen of Paris, he never could have written any thing equal to the combat of Turenne. There is an ardour in the description which transports me. Confess the truth ! You were present at this combat ; you saw it, and wrote down each lunge, each parry, given and received ; you noted each gesture of the champions, and, by that superior force peculiar to genius, read every thing that passed in the hearts of these valiant combatants. Caracci could not better have drawn the different attitudes of this duel ; and Le Brun, with all his colouring, certainly never could have equalled the little picture of refraction, given by our amiable, our dear, philosophic poet.

The passage added to the seventh book is alike admirable, and very proper to find a place in the edition which I am preparing, of the *Henriade*. But, my dear Voltaire, spare the race of bigots, and fear your persecutors. This single article is enough to bring you into new troubles.

troubles. Nothing is more pernicious than to be suspected of irreligion. In vain do we make all imaginable efforts, to escape this blame; it is an accusation that never is effaced. I speak from experience, and perceive that extreme circumspection is necessary on this subject.

Your verses are conformable to reason, and consequently must be to truth: but this is exactly the cause that idiots, and stupid people, will take offence. Do not, therefore, communicate them to your ungrateful country, but treat it as the sun treats the Laplanders; suffer not the truth and beauty of your productions to shine any where, except in a place where the author is esteemed and venerated; in fine, in a country where men are allowed not to continue stupid, where they are suffered to think, and, having thought, to speak.

You will perceive I mean England; for there it is that I have found it convenient to have the *Henriade* engraved. I mean to write a preface, which I will communicate to you before I commit it to the press. Pesne makes the drawings for the plates, and Knobeldorf for the vignettes. It is impossible sufficiently to honour the work, or enough to esteem its respectable author. Posterity shall owe the obligation to me of an engraved edition of the *Hen-*

riade; like as we are indebted to those who have preserved the *Æneid*, or the works of Phidias or Praxiteles.

I find you are determined that my name shall appear in your works. You imitate the prophet Elijah, who, ascending to heaven, left his mantle to the prophet Elisha. You are resolved I shall participate in your fame. My name will stand like a hut in a beautiful landscape, which is visited for the sake of surrounding objects.

After having spoken of the *Henriade*, and its author, silence should ensue, and no other work be mentioned. I must, however, render you an account of my occupations.

I am at present employed on Machiavel. I am writing notes on his Prince, and have begun a work which will entirely refute his maxims, by the contradiction which is found between them and virtue, as well as by their opposition to the true interests of princes. It is not enough to point out virtue to men, we must also set the springs of interest in motion, without which but few will follow the dictates of reason. I cannot say when I shall have accomplished my task; for dissipation, of various kinds, at present prevents me from a regular pursuit of the work. I hope, however, if my health and other occupations will

will permit, that in three months time I shall be able to send you the manuscript.

Nifus and Euryalus must be civil enough to wait, till Machiavel is dispatched. I keep pace with those poor mortals who travel slowly : my grasp is not great. I would not have you imagine that each body has a hundred hands, like that of Voltaire-Briareus. One of the hands of this Voltaire is employed in philosophy ; another in poetry ; a third on history ; and so on, everlastingly. It is affirmed that this man has more than one mind, and that he himself forms a whole academy.

How much is a man tempted to bewail his fate, when he reflects on the unequal division of talents, and on the poor portion, which falls to his share ! In vain would any one tell me of the equality of conditions ; I will for ever maintain there is an infinite difference between that universal man I have just mentioned and other mortals. It certainly would be a great consolation to me to be personally acquainted with him ; but we are fated to travel such different roads that it should seem it is decreed we must fly each other.

You send me poetical food, for my mind ; and I return you prescriptions, for the recovery of your body : they are written by a very able

K k 3

physician,

physician, whom I have consulted, concerning your disease, and who affirms he does not despair of your cure. Take the medicines he indicates, for I hope you will derive benefit from them.

As this letter, according to all appearances, will find you at Brussels, I may speak to you more freely on the subject of his eminence*, and your country at large. I have no patience when I recollect the little respect paid you, and I will willingly use my efforts to procure you, at least, tranquillity. The marquis de la Chétardie, to whom I had written, is unfortunately departed from Paris; but I will find some means of letting the cardinal understand what I think, of a man whom I love and esteem.

The Hungarian wine and amber shall be sent off, as soon as I know if your erratic star, and chicanery, have suffered you to stay at Brussels. Honi, my wine merchant, will give you this letter; but, when you write in answer, let me beg you to address your letters to general Borck, at Wesel. Dear Cefario, who is here at present, cannot forbear to reiterate every thing which esteem and friendship can inspire. Pray let the marchioness understand how high-

* The cardinal de Fleuri.

ly I admire the author of the essay on fire, and how much I esteem the friend of M. de Voltaire.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XC.

From the Prince Royal.

May, 1739 *.

I HAVE only a moment to assure you of my friendship, and to pray you to accept the amber ink-stand and the trifles which I send. Be kind enough to give the other box, which contains *le jeu de quilles* † to the marchioness. We are so busy here that we have scarcely time to breathe. A fortnight hence, I shall be able to be more prolix. The Hungarian wine cannot be sent before the end of summer, because of the heat of the weather. I am at present engaged in superintending the edition of the *Henriade*. I will communicate every arrangement which I have made, on the subject.

* Dated June the 1st in the Berlin edition.

† Nine pins, No doubt in miniature. T.

We have lost the most learned man of Berlin, who was the repository of all the men of learning of Germany; an absolute store-house of science. The celebrated M. de la Croze is buried, and with him twenty different languages; the quintessence of history and a multitude of anecdotes, no circumstance of which had escaped his prodigious memory. Was he then doomed to learn so much and to die at the age of fourscore?—Ought he not rather to have lived eternally, as a reward for his labours?

The works we possess of this prodigiously learned man do not, in my opinion, make him sufficiently known. His memory, no doubt, was his brightest ornament: and of this he gave proofs on whatever subject might be proposed. He would cite the edition, and the page, in which you might find what you wished to be informed of, without ever being mistaken. The infirmities of age did not diminish this extraordinary gift of memory; and, even to the last breath of life, he continued to amass treasures of erudition, which are eternally hidden in the grave*.

* The French joins the next sentence, and reads—"A perfect knowledge of philosophic systems and their principal and minute parts were buried with him in the grave."—This, though the two editions agree, I imagine to be erroneous, and the effect of false pointing; which conjecture the context strongly favours. T.

Although

Although he had a perfect knowledge of all philosophic systems, as well of their principal as of their minute points, M. de la Croze was but an indifferent philosopher : he followed the system of Descartes, in which he had been educated, and probably acted from prejudice, and that he might not forget the habit to which he had been accustomed between sixty and seventy years, of being of this opinion. Judgment, penetration, and a certain ardour of mind, which are so characteristic of original genius, were not a part of his composition: but, in revenge, unequivocal probity, in good or ill fortune, rendered him respectable, and deserving the esteem of all worthy people.

Pity us, my dear Voltaire ! Great men die, and we do not perceive others arise ! It should seem that learning and orange trees must both be transplanted, into this country ; and that our ungrateful soil is incapable of reproduction, when the ardent rays of the sun, or the severe frosts of winter, have once dried up their juices.

Thus it was that, insensibly, and by degrees, barbarism was introduced into the capital of the world, after the fortunate age of Cicero and Virgil. When poet succeeds to poet, philosopher to philosopher, and orator to orator, we then may hope to see the sciences perpetuated.

But,

But, when death robs us of them, successively, without any prospect of substitutes for the age to come, it does not seem as if we interred a learned man, but rather the sciences themselves.

I am, with all those sentiments which you so well know how to inspire, and which are so difficult to express, &c.

L E T T E R X C I,

From M. de Voltaire.

May, 1739-

YOUR royal highness takes the part of citadels against Machiavel, and it should seem that the empire thinks after the same manner, for twelve hundred florins truly have been set apart for the repairs of Philipsburg, to complete which it is said more than twelve thousand are necessary.

There are few fortresses in the two Sicilies, and this is the reason these countries have had so many different masters. Did we find such places as Namur, Valenciennes, Tournay, and Luxemburg, in Italy—

Cbe

*Che or giù da l'Alpi non vedrei torrenti
 Scender d'armati né di sangue tinta
 Bever l'onda del Po, gallici armenti;
 Ne la vedrei del non suo ferro cinta,
 Pagnar col braccio di straniere genti,
 Per servir sempre, o vincitrice, o vinta *.*

The emperor and the English must necessarily retake this fine country, in the ensuing spring, or it would remain too long under one and the same government. Happy, sir, are those who can live under your protection.

I have begun, sir, to take your powder: either there is no Providence or it will do me good. I have no expressions sufficient to thank Marcus Aurelius transformed to Esculapius,

I am, with the most profound respect, and the tenderest gratitude, &c.

* We then should not behold such armed multitudes descend from the Alps; nor the crowding Gaul drink the waters of the blood-tinged Po; nor Italy, girded by swords not native there, fighting with a foreign arm, and, whether victor or vanquished, still enslaved.

L E T T E R XCII.,

From M. de Voltaire,

S I R,

June 1, 1739.

IT is decreed that I must be indebted to your royal highness for the recovery of my health. For about a month I have been denied to write, but at length my desire to write to my sovereign has given me strength. I must have been very ill, when the verses which I received from Berlin, dated April the 26th, were unable to reanimate my body, while animating my mind. The epistle on the necessity of filling up the vacuum of the year, by study, is, I believe, the best poetical work which has been produced by my modern Marcus Aurelius.

*C'est ainsi qu'à Berlin, à l'ombre du silence,
Je consacrais mes jours aux Dieux de la science *.*

The whole of the conclusion is finished, and the other parts of the piece are every where adorned with flights of fancy. Your *reason* has a deal of *wit*: but I am still more strongly in-

* Thus at Berlin, in silent shades, I dedicate my days to the Gods of science.

terested in another of your children ; I mean your refutation of Machiavel. I have read it again, and can again assure your royal highness that it is a work necessary to the good of mankind. I will not conceal from you that I have discovered repetitions ; and that, though one of the finest trees in the world, it must be lopped. I speak the truth to you, great prince, because you merit it should be spoken ; and hope that, hereafter, when you shall be seated on a throne, you will then find friends who will speak with equal freedom. You are formed to be singular, in every thing you undertake ; and to enjoy pleasures of which other kings are destined to remain ignorant. The baron von Kayserling will give you notice, when, by chance, you shall have passed a day without making any man happy ; a circumstance which will rarely occur.

In the mean time, I will employ myself in adding points, and commas, to the Anti-Machiavel ; and will profit by the permission which your royal highness has given me. I shall this day write to a bookseller in Holland, till such time as there shall be an excellent printing-house, and paper manufactory, at Berlin, which may supply all Germany.

I have this very moment been informed there
are

are some old pamphlets, in print, written against Machiavel's Prince. The titles of three of them I have been told : the first is *Anti-Machiavel* ; the second *Discours d'Etat contre Machiavel* * ; the third *Fragmens contre Machiavel* †.

I shall be very glad to see them, that, if there should be occasion, I may mention them in my preface ; but these works are probably very indifferent since they are difficult to be found. This will not retard the impression of the finest work with which I am acquainted. How excellent a portrait do you there give of the French, and their government ! How interesting and strong is the chapter on ecclesiastical powers ! The comparison between Holland and Russia, and the reflections on the vanity of great lords, who are monarchs in miniature, are most charming morsels. I am now about to finish the fourth reading, with the pen in my hand. The work awakens in me a desire to finish my history of the age of Louis XIV. I blush at writing so many frivolous things, while my prince teaches me to what purpose I ought to write.

What will your royal highness say to me,

* A political Discourse against Machiavel.

† Fragments against Machiavel.

when you are told that a new tragedy of mine is preparing to be played, at Paris, which is not Mahomet? It is a tale of love; rose water distilled for the use of the French ladies *. It is for this reason that I have not ventured to mention it to your royal highness: I am ashamed of my effeminacy. Not that the piece is without a moral: it paints the dangers of love, as Mahomet does the dangers of fanaticism.

It is my intention again to correct much of Mahomet, and render it less unworthy of being dedicated to you. I mean to re-write the whole piece. I would pass my life in correcting myself, that I might merit the good graces of my adorable sovereign, and Emily. Your royal highness must have received a little philosophy, on my part, and much from her. Madame du Chatelet is, what I wish to be, worthy of your court.

I am, with profound respect, and the most lively gratitude, &c.

* The tragedy alluded to, here and in former letters, is Zulime.

L E T T E R X C I I I .

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Remusberg, June 26, 1739.

I HEARTILY wish your wandering star would fix, for my bewildered imagination no longer knows in what part of Brabant to seek you. Should but this erratic planet once direct your steps toward our solitude, I would assuredly employ all the secrets astronomy can teach to stop its course. I would even apply to astrology; would learn necromancy, and offer invocations to every god and every dæmon, that they might not permit you any more to quit these countries. But Ulysses, in despite of the incantations of Circe, thought only of leaving her island, in which all the caresses of the enchantress, goddess as she was, had less power over his heart than the remembrance of his dear Penelope. If I do not mistake, you would resemble Ulysses; and the deep memory of the beautiful Emily, and the power of affection, would be superior to all my gods and dæmons. It is but just that recent friendship should cede to that of longer date; I therefore yield to the marchioness:

marchionefs : but be it understood, on condition that she support my secondary claims, against every opponent.

I thought I might have proceeded tolerably fast, in what I proposed to write against Machiavel ; but I find the imagination of youth is a little too ardent. To know every thing which has been written upon Machiavel, it was necessary to read a great number of books ; and, in order to digest all I had read, additional time must be employed. The journey which we are about to make, into Prussia, will likewise occasion some interruption, in my studies ; and retard the *Henriade*, *Machiavel*, and *Euryalus*.

I have not received any answer from England, but you may rest assured it is a thing determined, and that the *Henriade* shall be engraved. I hope I shall be able to send you news of the work, and the preface to it, before my return from Prussia, which may be about the 15th of August. An indolent prince, in my apprehension, is an animal of small utility in the world. I wish, at least, to serve my age, as far as I have the power. I wish to contribute to the immortality of a work which is useful to mankind. I wish to multiply copies of a poem, in which the author teaches the duties of every class, a manner of reigning but little known to princes, and

of thinking which would more have ennobled the gods of Homer than even their cruelties and caprices have rendered them contemptible.

You give a true but fearful portrait of religious wars, the wickedness of priests, and the fatal effects of false zeal. These are lessons which cannot be too often repeated to men, who ought, at least, to be rendered more prudent, by past folly.

What I meditate, against Machiavel, is properly a continuation of the *Henriade*. On the great sentiments of Henry IV. I forge the thunder which is to fall on Cæsar Borgia. With respect to Nisus and Euryalus, they must wait till time, and your corrections, have invigorated my poetic vein.

I send the Hungarian wine, addressed to the duke d'Aremberg, by lieutenant Schilling. The duke is certainly the patriarch of good fellows, and may be regarded as the father of joy and pleasure. Silenus has bestowed a countenance on him which does not belie his character, and which in him displays an amiable voluptuousness, purified from every obscenity attending on debauch.

I hope the air you breathe, in Brabant, is more free than that of France; and that the security of this abode will no less contribute than
medicine

medicine to your health ; for which I assure you I am greatly interested : not a day passes in which I do not offer up prayers, in your favour, to the goddess Hygeia.

I hope all my packets are come safe to hand, but pray be kind enough to inform me. It is said that the Pleasures have given you the meeting, on your route—

That, hand in hand, the Sisters three,
Sweet Song, and Dance, and Comedy,
Attend your steps ; and, on your way,
With their associates sport and play :
That all the Loves, and smiling Hours,
The road you travel, strew with flow'rs ;
In sweet contention, striving who
Those honours best shall pay, to you,
Which are perform'd, with rites divine,
To Phoebus, by the Muses nine !

It is further added—

From Paris late the Graces fled,
With true Politeness ; and, instead
Of deities so blest, is seen
That gaping, whining witch, the Spleen !
And that, in these abodes of fraud,
The multitude is taught t' applaud
The crooked paths of Policy,
Who quite has banish'd Honesty.
They say that Truth is also flown,
Fearing a priest with pride o'ergrown ;
At last, and, of consequence,
The foe of freedom, wit, and sense.

Here is a poetical gazette for you, after the fashion of Remusberg. If you delight in news, I promise you as much as you please, in prose and verse, on my return.

A thousand assurances of esteem, to my rival in your affections, to Emily, I hope you will keep the engagements, which you have entered into, with Superville, of being obedient.

Cesario will tell you all that a heart like his feels, when it has been fortunate enough to become acquainted with yours. For my own part, I am, more than ever, &c.

L E T T E R XCIV.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Berlin, July 7, 1732.

I HAVE received the ingenious travels of the baron de Gangan * at the very instant of my departure from Remusberg. I have been much amused by the celestial traveller ; though I have remarked in him some touches of satire,

* This is probably the work which has since been printed under the title of *Micromégas*.

and

and malicious wit, which make him greatly resemble the inhabitants of our earth; but which he manages so well that we perceive in him a more ripened judgment, and a more lively imagination, than in any other thinking being.

There is an article, in these travels, in which I discover the affection and prejudice of my friend, in favour of the editor of the *Henriade*. Yet permit me to express my astonishment at perceiving, in a work, in which you wish to humble the ridiculous vanity of man, and reduce that to its just value which he has been accustomed to call great, a work in which pride and presumption are lowered, to perceive, I say, in this, an attempt to increase my self-love, and furnish arguments in favour of the good opinion I may have conceived of myself.

All that I can say on the subject is this; the eye of friendship sees objects through a medium that bears no resemblance to that through which they are viewed by the eye of insensibility, or indifference.

I hope my last letter, in company with the Hungarian wine, has by this time arrived. Your residence at Bruffels will but little accelerate our correspondence, for a time; for I am immediately to depart, on a journey as dull as it is fatiguing. We are to travel more than a

thousand German miles in five weeks. We shall pass through places but ill inhabited, and which will be as little agreeable to me as the country of the Getæ was to Ovid, in his exile. Let me entreat you to redouble your correspondence; for not less than two of your letters per week can revive me, under stupor so insupportable.

Brussels, and almost all Germany, partake of their ancient barbarity: the arts are there but little honoured, and consequently but little cultivated. The nobles serve in the army; or, with a slight degree of knowledge, enter at the bar; not to study, but to enjoy their ease. The petty gentry, well rented, live in the country, or rather in the woods, which renders them as ferocious as the animals they hunt. The nobility of this country, in general, resemble those of other German provinces; except that they have a greater desire to gain instruction, more vivacity, and, if I dare so say, more genius than the chief part of the nation; and especially than the Westphalians, Franconians, Suabians and Austrians. For which reason, we may one day expect to see the arts here rescued from the vulgar, and inhabiting wealthy houses and palaces. Berlin principally contains, in itself, if I may venture to use the expression, the embers

bers of all the arts : genius is every where seen sparkling, and a lucky breath of air is only wanting, to give life to those sciences which rendered Athens, and Rome, more famous than all their wars and conquests.

You must be particularly sensible of the difference, between the life led at Paris and that at Brussels; you, who can only exist surrounded by the arts; and who have collected, at Cirey, every thing that delicate voluptuousness could conceive, or whatever was most poignant, among the pleasures of the imagination.

The Spanish gravity of the archduchess, and the starched ceremony of her little court, will not inspire a philosopher, who estimates all things by their intrinsic value, with much veneration. I am certain the baron of Gangan would pourtray the ridicule of these things, were he to continue his travels as far as Brussels.

Adieu, my dear friend; I am departing. Let me beg you to supply me with whatever your pen shall produce; for my understanding is in great danger of expiring with inanity, unless its life should be preserved by your cares.

I work, as hard as my leisure will permit, against Machiavel, and for the *Henriade*; and I hope I shall be able to send you the preface, to the new edition, from Königsberg.

L 14

A thousand

A thousand marks of esteem to the divine Emily. I cannot comprehend how any body can appear in court against her; or of what nature the law-suit, with which she is troubled, can be. I have no interests to discuss with her, except those of the heart.

Take care of your health: do not forget how much I am interested in your preservation, and that my content and your prosperity are connected, by indissoluble ties.

I am, &c.

P. S. The physician, whom I have recommended to you, is named Superville; a man of experience, on whose knowledge I can depend. Address the letters which you write for him to me: I will take care you shall have his answers; but do not neglect his advice, and I have then reason to hope the feebleness of your constitution may be remedied, and the infirmities with which your life is embittered removed.

L E T.

LETTER XCV.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

Brussels, 1739.

AMID the delights of Enghien, Emily and I have received the most supreme pleasure we could possibly taste. A person, who has had the happiness to see my young Marcus Aurelius, has brought us a charming letter from him ; together with amber ink stands, and boxes.

From good Mr. Gerard, we ardently seize'd
Your presents, of pleasure and profit, well pleas'd !

Hereafter, sir, we shall play at cards with the counters you have furnished, and write with your pens of amber.

Of many a piteous and pellucid tear,
Shed by his sisters who, from Sol's dread sphere,
By angry Jove, was for presumption hurl'd
Flaming to earth, and half consum'd the world,
This amber erst was form'd, as has been said.
Hard was the fate of each too wretched maid ;
They weeping were to pines transform'd the while :
Pines meant to form the youth's funereal pile.

The Gods daily overturn those charioteers who
under-

undertake to drive us, and seldom are tears shed at their downfall.

On our return from Enghien, we had scarcely arrived at Bruffels before we received another and a new consolation ; a letter from your royal highness, dated July the 7th, by way of Amsterdam. It seems you are acquainted with the country in which I am. I here meet with many princes, but few men ; that is to say, thinking, well informed, men.

What then, sir, is to become, in your city of Berlin, of the sciences which you encourage, and to which you do so much honour ? Who shall replace M. de la Croze ? It must no doubt be M. Jordan. He seems to me to be in the true road of erudition.

But, after all, sir, there will always be men of learning. The men of genius, by communicating their thoughts and feelings, will render others learned : they are the eldest sons of Prometheus, who proceed distributing celestial fire to ill organized masses ; and of these there will always be very few, in every country. The whole ardour of the marchioness is, at present, employed in this disagreeable law-suit ; which has obliged her to quit her favourite solitude, at Cirey : while I am collecting my few trifles to
form

form something new, which may please the modern Marcus Aurelius.

I therefore take the liberty to send you the first act of a tragedy; which, if I am not mistaken, is written, if not in a good, at least in a new taste. Superstition and fanaticism have never been represented on the stage; and, should not this essay displease my judge, I will send the remainder, act by act.

I meant to have done myself the honour to send this beginning by M. de Valori, who is to reside as French envoy in Prussia. If I am not misinformed, he is worthy to dine with the father, and sup with the son. I daily expect to see him at Brussels, and hope I shall find in him a new patron, with your royal highness.

The thousand German miles, which you are about to travel, will somewhat retard the defeat of Machiavel, and the instructions which I expect to receive from your revered and cherished hand. I know not whether the baron von Kayserling has the good fortune to accompany your royal highness: he is either to be pitied or envied.

I will write to M. de Superville. I had no faith in physicians, till your royal highness became the Esculapius who condescended to take care of my health.

Emily

Emily leaves her lawyers, that she may have the honour of writing to the patron of the arts, and of humanity.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XCVI.

From M. de Voltaire.

Brussels, 1739.

SOME million ages of the mighty dead
 Had pass'd away, since first 'twas sung, or said,
 How sly Prometheus, wanting much such wealth,
 The sacred fire of heav'n purloin'd, by stealth.
 This on our fires he generously bestow'd;
 With genial heat terrestrial nature glow'd;
 Each land had part; but, bound in icy chains,
 Extinct the hyperborean fire remains.
 Fierce Teuton, Cimbrian, Vandal, Ostrogoth,
 To lose the quick'ning sense of pleasure loth,
 In butts of heady beer and pipes of wine,
 Long sought in vain to find the spark divine;
 A black thick vapour fill'd the vacant space,
 And did but stupify the heavy race.
 At length, indeed, the great Christina came,
 In whom was seen some portion of the flame;
 But with her treasure soon she fallied forth,
 And fled the frozen regions of the North,

Where

Where slumb'ring Nature, pent in caverns, lies
 In twilight gloom, and neither lives nor dies!
 But, at the moment when her sons refrain
 All further search, and deem their labour vain,
 My prince the blest'd deposit finds entire!
 On Remus' summit flames the sacred fire;
 Whence he, in whom 'tis seen so bright to glow,
 Communicates it to the wondering world below!
 Again the arts revive; and Wisdom reigns,
 August in splendor, o'er these happy plains;
 While Earth exclaims, in joys but half express'd,
 "Once more Prometheus lives, and I am blest'd!"

This short allegorical truth took birth, my adorable monarch, at sight of the last packet from your royal highness; in which you pass so excellent a judgment on metaphysics, and appear so amiable, so good and great, in verse and prose. Well may I call you my Prometheus! Your fire revives the embers of a soul enfeebled by many ills and sufferings. For a month past, I have been in continual anguish. A few days ago, I snatched a moment to write to your royal highness, during which my pain ceased: but I know not whether my letter has reached you; it was in a cover, and addressed to the correspondents of Mr. David Gerard, who have thought proper to become bankrupts. I have the honour to be included in their misfortune, for some trifling effects, which I had

confided to them. But my most precious wealth is my correspondence with Marcus Aurelius; if none of my letters to him are lost, they may lose every thing else I possess, and I will not once complain.

In that letter, I had the honour to inform your royal highness that I was on the point of publishing the catechism of virtue, and that lesson for princes in which false politics, and the logic of knaves, are confounded with so much wit, and force of argument. I have used the liberty you gave me, and have endeavoured to make the chapters nearly equal in length to those of Machiavel. I have thrown in a handful of mortar, in one or two places, into this edifice of marble. Forgive me, and suffer me still further to retrench that which relates to religious disputes, in the twenty-first chapter.

Machiavel there speaks of the address with which Ferdinand of Arragon drew money from the church, under pretence of making war on the Moors, and which he employed for the invasion of Italy. The queen of Spain has just done the same. Ferdinand of Arragon carried his hypocrisy so far as to expel the Moors, that he might acquire the name of good catholic, empty with impunity the purses of his silly catholic subjects, and religiously pillage the
Moors.

Moors. There is therefore no question, in this passage, concerning the disputes of priests and the venerable follies of theologians, and sectaries, which you, in another place, treat as they deserve.

For this reason, with your permission, I shall take the liberty to cut off this trifling excrescence, from a body the symmetry of which is admirable, in all its parts. I can never cease repeating, it will be a very singular, and very useful book.

And does your royal highness, while performing things like these, deign to send for silver type, from England, to print the *Henriade*? And is printing the first of the fine arts, to which your royal highness will give birth? It is an art which indeed ought to be dear to you, for it shall perpetuate your virtues, as examples to posterity. How many others soon will follow, and how quickly will Berlin become another Athens! But the first rising art revives in my favour; in my behalf, you begin to do good.

Yes, I'm your subject; yours; my heart has ceas'd
Dependence on a proud capricious priest.
Heav'n heard my prayers, which daily I renew;
A sage I wish'd, a sage I find in you!
A noble hero! One of those who seek
T' unmask the bigot and protect the weak!

His

His gods the Virtues are ; his sons the Arts ;
 To me his thoughts inspired the prince imparts :
 With me th' untrodden wilds he deigns to wend
 Of truth and poetry ; me deigns to lend
 His light and aid ! Hear this, ye slaves of state,
 Who toil with bulky burthen, void of weight !
 Who always thoughtful, yet who never think !
 Hear kings ! and, if you can, forbear to shrink !
 Ye phantoms, whom a foolish world obeys,
 Follow a guide so great, and merit praise !

May I venture to misuse the goodness of your royal highness, so far as to suggest an idea which originated in your bounties ?

Your royal highness is the only protector of the Henriade. Tapestry is here excellently manufactured ; and, with your permission, I would cause four or five pieces to be woven, containing the four or five most picturesque designs with which you deign to embellish the work. The massacre of St. Bartholemew, the temple of Fate, the temple of Love, and the battle of Ivry, I imagine would furnish four excellent pieces of tapestry, for some chamber in your palace, according to the dimensions which your royal highness should send. I believe they would be executed in something less than two years. I foresee that the law-suit of madame du Chatelet, which detains me at Brussels, may continue three or four years. I shall certainly have time to
 serve

serve your royal highness, in this little attempt, if you should so wish. I likewise foresee that, if your royal highness should hereafter desire to form a tapestry manufactory in your Athens, you may easily procure workmen from this place. I seem already to see all the arts assembled at Berlin, and trade and pleasure flourishing; for I place pleasure in the rank of the finest arts.

Madame du Chatelet has received the letter of your royal highness, and will soon do herself the honour to write an answer. You have good reason, sir, to say that people ought not to quarrel concerning metaphysics; it is the province only of divines to hate each other for what they do not understand. I own I should willingly place at the end of every chapter on metaphysics, the L and the N of the Roman senators, which signified *non liquet*, and which they wrote upon their tablets, when the advocates had not sufficiently explained the cause.

With respect to geometry, I imagine that, except some forty theorems on which all sound physical philosophy is founded, the remainder contains little more than difficult truths, which in themselves are dry and useless. I am glad that I am not wholly ignorant of, though I should be sorry to be too learned in, geometry, and to give up so many agreeable things in behalf of fruit-

less combinations. I am better pleased with your Anti-Machiavel than with all the curves that have, or have not, been squared. I take more delight in a good history than in a theorem, which may be true without being beautiful.

Be assured, sir, that I also place well-written epistles in the rank of pleasures, preferable to fines and tangents. The epistle on falsehood charms and astonishes me; for, though you are better in health than I am, though you are of an age in which genius is in its full force, your days are not longer than ours, and you, no doubt, are occupied by the plans which you trace, for the good of mankind. You are trying your strength in secret, that you may be able to bear the splendid but painful burden, which soon will be laid upon your shoulders. Yet is my Prometheus Apollo, whenever he pleases.

How fortunate is M. de Camas, to merit and to receive such praises! I am particularly pleased with that crowd of splendid images, with which you embellish the art you so much honour. At this moment I see vice *an immense and stormy ocean*, and presently it is

*Un monstre couronné, de qui les sifflemens
Ecartent, loin de lui, la vérité si pure* *.

* A sceptred monster, whose hissings drive pure truth far from his presence.

I particularly

I particularly remark examples drawn from history, and discover the hand which has heaped confusion on Machiavel.

I know not, fir, whether you will be still on Mount Remus or on the throne, when Anti-Machiavel shall appear. Diseases like that with which the king is afflicted are sometimes tedious. I have a nephew, whom I tenderly love, who is absolutely in the same state, and who, for these six months, has been struggling for life. Whatever may happen, nothing can increase the sentiments of respect, and tender gratitude, with which I have the honour to be, &c.

LETTER XCVII.

From the Prince Royal.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Insterburg, July 27, 1739.

HERE at length we are, after a journey of three weeks, in a country which I consider as the *non plus ultra* of the civilized world; a province but little known in Europe, but which merits, however, to be known; since it may be regarded as the creation of the king, my father.

Prussian Lithuania is a dutchy, containing thirty great German leagues in length, and twenty in width, though it narrows toward Sa-

M m 2

mogitia.

mogitia. This province was ravaged by the plague, in the beginning of the present century; and more than three hundred thousand inhabitants perished, by disease and want. The court, ill informed of the miseries of the people, neglected to aid a rich and fertile province, full of inhabitants, and fruitful in every kind of production. Disease carried off the people, and the lands remained uncultivated, and overgrown with brambles. The very cattle were not exempt from the public calamity: in a word, the most flourishing of our provinces was changed into a most fearful desert.

In the mean time, Frederic I. died; and he and his false grandeur were buried together; grandeur which only consisted in vain pomp, and a fastidious display of frivolous ceremonies.

My father, his successor, was affected by the public misery, repaired to the province, and was a personal spectator of this vast country thus laid waste, with all those traces which a contagious disease, famine, and the sordid avarice of ministers had left behind. Ten or fifteen depopulated towns, and four or five hundred uninhabited and uncultivated villages, was the mournful prospect which presented itself. Far from being discouraged, by objects like these, he felt the most lively compassion, and determined to people and restore plenty and commerce to a
country

country which had lost the very form of a country.

Since this time, the king has spared no expence, to succeed in his salutary views. He first formed wise regulations; he then rebuilt all that the pestilence had laid desolate, and sent for some thousands of families, from all parts of Europe. The lands were cleared, the country re-peopled; commerce began to flourish, and at present the country is more abundant and fertile than ever.

Lithuania contains more than half a million of inhabitants; the towns and the cattle are increased, and there is more wealth and fruitfulness here than in any part of Germany; for all of which it is indebted to the king; who not only issued orders but personally took care that they were obeyed; formed plans and executed them himself; spared no care, no labour, no sums, however immense, no promises, no rewards, that he might confirm half a million of thinking beings, who are indebted to him for their felicity and establishment, in life and prosperity.

I hope you will not be displeased with this account. Your humanity will extend to your Lithuanian brethren, as well as to those in France, England, Germany, and elsewhere; and the more so because, to my great astonish-

ment, I have passed through villages in which I heard nothing but French spoken.

I have discovered I know not what of heroism, in the generous and laborious manner in which the king has rendered the desert habitable, fertile, and happy; and, if I am not deceived, you will have the same sensations, when informed of the circumstances of this re-establishment.

I daily expect your letters from Enghien: I hope you there enjoy perfect repose, and that Dulness, that heavy stupid deity, will not dare to assault you in the arms of Emily. Do not forget me, my dear friend, but rest persuaded that my distance does but increase my impatience to see and embrace you. Farewel.

My compliments to the marchioness, and the duke; for whom Apollo and Bacchus contend.

L E T T E R XCVIII.

From M. de Voltaire.

S I R,

August 12, 1739.

I TAKE the liberty to send your royal highness the second act of Mahomet, by favour of the sieurs David Gerard and company. I

I

wish

with the Muffulmen may be as successful, with your royal highness, as they have been in Moldavia. I certainly could not have taken a better opportunity to entertain you concerning these infidels, of whom the world speaks more loudly than ever.

I imagine your royal highness is, at this moment, on those shores on which that fine amber is gathered which, thanks to your goodness, is sent to us in the form of ink-stands, and other articles. I was always a loser at cards, when I played with common fish; but since I have played with the amber fish, sent by your royal highness, I have continually won.

No more I fear disgrace ; my prince presides,
And me protects, enlightens, loves, and guides.

I will entreat the luminous star of Frederic to shine over my head during a short residence which I am going to make with the marchioness, your subject, at Paris. For philosophers, ours is a very wandering life ; but our prince, more a philosopher than ourselves, is not less ambulatory. Should I meet any tall fellow on my road, six feet high, I will tell him to go immediately and serve in the regiment of my prince. And, should I stumble on any man of wit, I

shall say to him—"How unfortunate that you
"do not reside at his court!"

Yours, indeed, is the only court for thinking beings. Your royal highness knows what others are: that of France is a little more gay, since the king has ventured to be in love. He is at present in the train of becoming a great man, for he has feeling. Woe be to the hardened heart. God blest the affectionate soul. Insensibility has I know not what of reprobable; for which reason St. Theresa defined the devil to be the wretched being that is incapable of love.

We hear of nothing, at Paris, but festivals and fire-works. I know not how much money is squandered in powder, and sky-rockets. Money formerly was expended in pleasures of the understanding; and, when Louis XIV. gave festivals, they were regulated by men like Corneille, Moliere, Quinault, Lulli, and Le Brun. I am chagrined to be told of a festival so momentary, which consists of nothing but noise, crowd, and a few diamonds. I wish it should descend to posterity. Our masters, the Romans, understood these things better: their amphitheatres, and triumphal arches, built for some solemn day, still please and afford us information. We raise a scaffold in the place de Grève, where
the

the day before some thieves have been broken on the wheel ; and fire cannon from the town-hall. I could rather wish these cannons were planted to batter down the town-hall, which is built in the worst taste possible ; and that the money spent in squibs was employed in erecting another. A prince who builds necessarily causes the arts to flourish : painting, sculpture, and engraving are the attendants of architecture. One fine edifice is destined for music ; another for comedy : At Paris, we have neither any theatre for comedy nor opera ; and, from a contradiction too worthy of ourselves, the most excellent works are represented on the vilest theatres. Good dramatic writings are found in France, and fine theatres in Italy.

I talk of nothing but pleasures to your royal highness, while you are seriously combating Machiavel, for the good of mankind. But I act according to my vocation, as my prince does according to his ; at the most, I can but amuse ; he is destined to instruct mankind.

I am, &c.

LET-

L E T T E R XCIX.

From the Prince Royal.

Kœnigsberg, August 9, 1739.

I.

AUTHOR sublime! Enchanting friend!
 Whose streams Pierian ever flow,
 So pure, so plenteous, and so full;
 Nor ebbes nor shallows ever know!

II.

In Lithuania's frozen climes
 Your mighty genius is renown'd;
 Here have I seen your tragic muse.
 False zeal and bigot pride confound.

III.

Your philosophic works are mine;
 Your travell'd baron too is here;
 With all which you so well have said,
 In honour of the great Moliere.

IV.

What, blindly still a son like this,
 Ungrateful France, canst thou neglect!
 Yet, with thy honours and thy wealth,
 Thy dull academy protect!

In reality, I am certain these forty heads,
 that are paid for thinking and employed to
 write, do not perform half the work that you
 do; and that, if we could estimate or weigh
 thought, the whole ideas of that numerous bo-
 dy,

dy, collectively, would kick the beam, if weighed against yours. The sciences are attainable by all men; but the art of thinking is the most uncommon gift Nature has to bestow.

Banish'd the schools this art has been;
 Nor ever was with pedant seen.
 The holy inquisition would
 Prohibit thinking, if they could.
 For most, who wear the sacred vest,
 Do thinking cordially detest.
 The silly mob pretend this art
 Is theirs, they've all the rules by heart;
 While Flatt'ry vows, in humble tone,
 'Tis to her patron only known.
 Ignorance, wide eyed, believes 'tis found
 In some uncouth, unmeaning sound;
 And wond'ring hears Hyperbole explain
 An art, which Wisdom scarcely can attain!

Among a hundred persons, who imagine they think, there is scarcely one who thinks for himself; the remainder have only some two or three ideas, which keep their rotation, without change, or assuming any new form. And even the hundredth will perhaps think what some other has before thought, and not possess genius, and a creative imagination. These are the qualities that multiply ideas, and search the relations which exist between things, of which the inattentive man has scarcely any perception; and this search is the essential power which, according to me, is peculiar to the man of genius.

This

This rare and precious gift, no art of speech
 Had, ever yet, invented rules to teach !
 Nature, or avaricious, poor, or sage,
 Scarcely bestows it more than once an age.
 But thine it is, no matter how, or why ;
 I'll waste no time to prove, what none deny.

Three sorts of works, which have fallen from your pen, have arrived here in six weeks. I imagine that there is, in some part of France, a select society of men, of equal and high genius, who labour together, and publish their works under the name of Voltaire ; as another society do theirs, under the name of Trevoux. If this be a rational opinion, I will become a trinitarian ; for I begin to perceive a shade of meaning, in that mystery, which Christians have hitherto believed to be incomprehensible.

What I have received of Mahomet appears to me to be *excellent* *. I cannot judge of the shell, till I see the whole body : but the verification, in my opinion, is nervous, and interspersed with portraits, and characters, which give success to works of imagination.

You have no need, my dear Voltaire, of the eloquence of M. de Valori ; for you are so circumstanced, that your reputation can neither be diminished nor increased.

* The Berlin edition, by some strange mistake, reads *recent*. T,

In vain would rancorous Envy foam and rage,
 The foe of man, afflicted at his weal !
 The reptile dates her birth on that bright day
 When Fame first sees the light ; and oft, with touch
 Impure, her venom sheds o'er History's page ;
 Nay tries to blast the laurels on your brow !
 Your soul, in love with all the arts, has long
 Well-earn'd renown by many a labour won.
 Newton your guide, and Emily your friend,
 Thuanus and great Maro you surpass.
 How vast or opposite foe'er the theme,
 Your sun with equal splendor darts his rays.
 More potent far that splendour is, with me,
 Than is the misty malice of your foes.

I am, with perfect esteem,
 My dear Voltaire,

Your very affectionate friend.

P. S. If you see the duke d'Aremberg, present my compliments, and tell him that two lines in French, under his hand, would give me more pleasure than a thousand German letters, in the true chancery style.

L E T T E R C.

From the Prince Royal.

From the Royal Stables of Prussia,
 August 15, 1739.

AT length, most wisely bidding pack
 Off with the poison, and the quack,

Snares

Snarcs and assassins you escape,
 And trust the life-inspiring grape.
 For physic now Tokay you take,
 And me henceforth your doctor make !
 Agreed !—The weighty charge be mine :
 My nostrum is Hungarian wine.
 Each other's doctor we're assign'd ;
 I for the body, you the mind.

I am glad to learn that the Hungarian wine
 is arrived at Brussels, and soon hope to hear you
 have drank of it, and that it has done you as
 much good as I expect. I am told you gave a
 charming banquet to the duke d'Arenberg,
 Madame Charolet, and the daughter of the
 Count de Laurai, of which I was glad ; for it is
 good to prove, by example, to all Europe, that
 knowledge and gallantry are not incompatible.

Old dotards, long shut up in cell,
 Whom words in lieu of wisdom swell,
 Remote from man, immur'd with books,
 Betray that horror, in their looks,
 In which they hold the merry race,
 Who turn to farce their wise grimace.
 Tho' they with virulence declaim
 Of taste, they scarcely know the name.
 Exteriors all their cares engage ;
 They search the gown, to find the sage ;
 And deem a work or learn'd, or wise,
 Not from its sense, but from its size.
 The vulgar herd, with error fraught,
 From dawning infancy, are taught,

When

When cumb'rous word-monger's extoll'd,
Wisdom's own image they behold!

That man might in its blessings share,
Heav'n deign'd at length to form Voltaire!
In colouring, which more brightly glows,
Philosophy once more arose!
Restor'd, ador'd, courageous, strong,
Crowding admirers round her throng!
Depths into which, with ardent eye,
Newton alone was form'd to pry,
Tow'rd which the commentating race,
In vain, a gloomy path would trace,
These thou hast enter'd, what though rude,
And round them many a flow'r hast strew'd!

Ye doctors, who, from book to book,
Hunt Folly, with such solemn look,
Behold, what though with glance uncouth,
How pleasant is the road of truth!
Your gloomy, thorny, route forsake;
And condescend this road to take.

I wait with impatience for the following acts
of Mahomet. I have no doubt of your success,
but am persuaded this singular tragedy will shine
forth, with new charms.

Thy conquering muse her banners having borne
O'er half the world, would Asia next adorn,
And subjugate; th' impostor's arts detect;
And paint the horrors of a bigot-sect.
Bless'd be her progress! May her virtuous steel
The Zealot spare, but reach the heart of Zeal!

I had

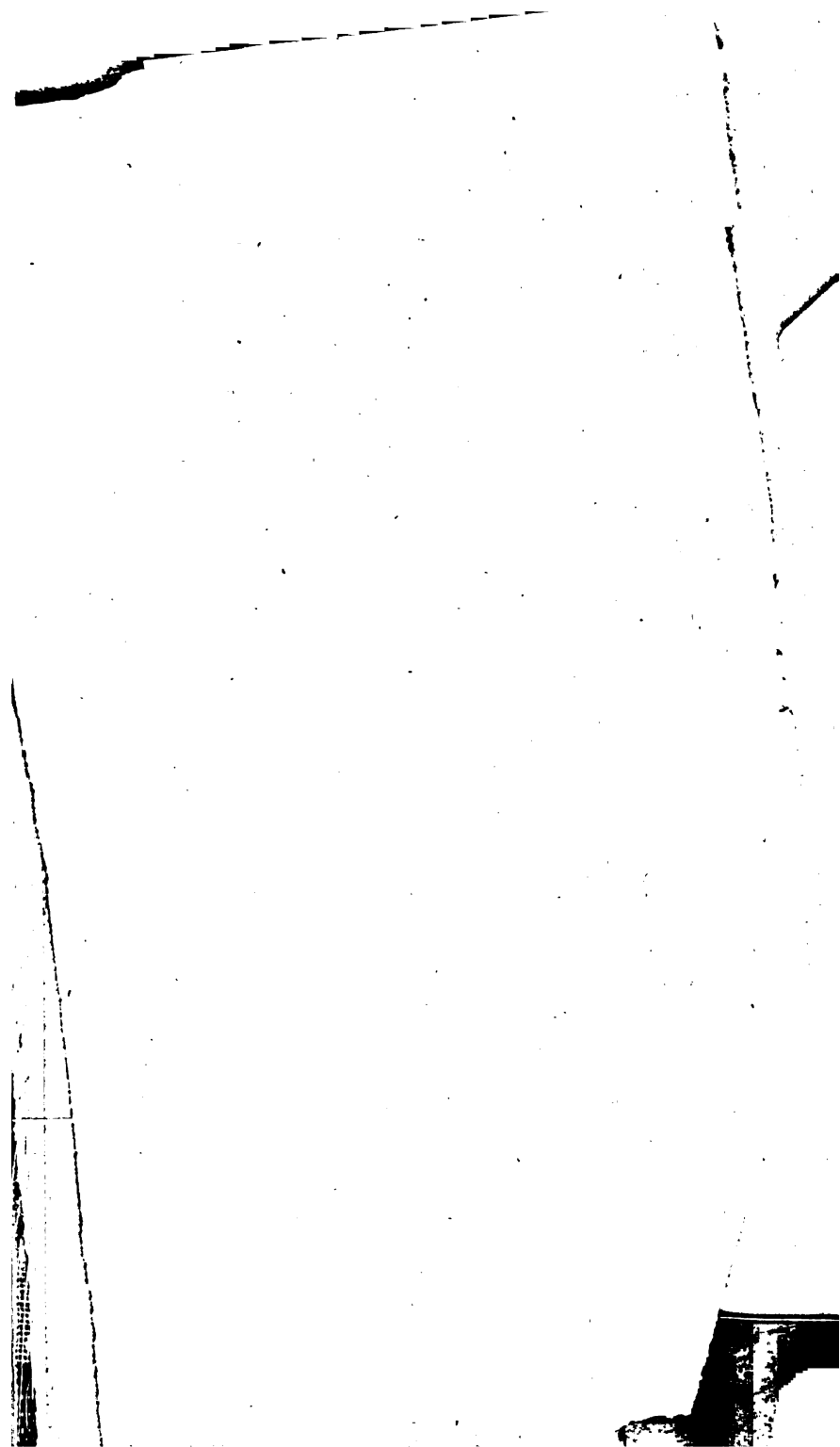
I had been told that I should find Machiavel defeated, in the political notes of Amelot de la Houffaye; and in Gordon's translation. Both theſe works, judicious and excellent in their kind, I have read; but have been pleaſed to ſee that my plan was of a very different nature. I ſhall endeavour to complete this plan, on my return; you ſhall be the firſt to ſee the work; nor ſhall it be ſeen, by the public, till approved by you. I have however been as induſtrious as travelling, the tribute which Birth, as it is ſaid, is obliged to pay to Indolence, and languor would permit me to be.

I ſhall be at Berlin on the 18th, and will then ſend you my preface to the *Henriade*, that it may obtain the ſeal of your approbation.

Adieu, my dear Voltaire. Be kind enough to preſent every aſſurance of eſteem to the marchioneſs du Chatelet and ſcold the duke d'Aremberg a little, for being ſo ſlow in his reply. I know not which of us is the moſt occupied, but I well know which is the moſt idle.

I am, with all poſſible affection, my dear Voltaire,

Your perfect friend.



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